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THE DIVINE EDUCATOR

OR GUIDE TO THE PROMOTION OF
FREQUENT AND DAILY COMMUNION
IN EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

Adapted from the "DIRECTOIRE" of Père Jules Lintelo, S.J.

BY

F. M. DE ZULUETA, S.J.

Including reprint of Leo XIII's "Mirae Caritatis"

"Frequent and Daily Communion is to be promoted especially . . .
in Christian establishments of whatever kind for the training of youth."

(Art. VII, Decree *On Daily Communion*)

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✠ JOHN CARDINAL FARLEY

Archbishop of New York

New York, Oct. 29, 1912

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Dedication

TO LITTLE NELLIE HORGAN, CALLED "OF THE HOLY GOD" BY
MANY, PIOUSLY BELIEVED TO BE EVEN NOW ENJOYING THE
UNCLOUDED SIGHT OF JESUS, WHOM IT WAS GIVEN
HER IN INFANT YEARS TO CRAVE FOR AND TO
RECEIVE BENEATH THE SACRAMENTAL VEIL,
MAY THE BANDS OF YOUTHS AND MAIDENS, NOW REJOICING ON
GOD'S HOLY MOUNT, IN VIRTUE OF THE BREAD OF ANGELS,
OBTAIN FOR THEIR STRUGGLING COMRADES HERE
BELOW A CONSTANT HUNGER FOR THE FOOD OF
INNOCENCE AND—FOR SHEPHERDS OF THE
YOUNG—UNTIRING ZEAL FOR DAILY
BREAKING IT TO ALL GOD'S CHILDREN.

FOREWORD

THE sacred cause of frequent and daily Communion is, thanks be to God, undoubtedly gaining ground amongst us. It has even made some impression upon those whose formed habits of religious practice—the result of an early training opposed to the principles of Pope Pius's Decree—seemed to offer the toughest resistance. But it still seems true that the greater hope for a eucharistic future lies chiefly with the young. Neither deeply-rooted theories, nor the necessity of reforming long established customs, stand in the way of our rising generation. The young are still capable of being perfectly moulded upon the model proposed in the "Sacra Tridentina Synodus," of December 20, 1905. Thus, the accomplishment of the Papal desires, revealed in the Encyclical of Leo XIII.—"Miræ Caritatis" *—and put into definite shape by his apostolic successor, depends principally upon the Catholic educator of youth of whatever category.

* As this beautiful and too much ignored Encyclical—the last documentary legacy of Leo XIII.—is out of print, we have reproduced it in Appendix I.

For this reason it appeared useful to supply Catholic educators with some kind of handbook or guide which might help them to acquit themselves of their responsibility in the matter of eucharistic training. Without the constant aid of the Heavenly Bread, their efforts to turn out staunch and self-denying Catholics, fit to take their place in the ranks of the Church Militant, are doomed to scanty success, if not to absolute failure.

The Catholic training of youth is the same in its leading principles and in practical means for moral discipline, whether those under training come from the higher or from the lower strata of society. It will hardly be denied, however, that the task of making good and sterling Catholics out of material drawn from the slums and alleys of our crowded modern cities presents the problem of training in its most arduous form. And yet those acquainted with the work of Dom Bosco know what marvellous transformations were effected in numbers of waifs and strays by his saintly zeal. His secret of education, then, must be worth the having. What is it? He gives it to us in that favourite saying of his referring to frequent Communion: "Tout est

Là" ("All depends on That"). Questioned one day by an astonished visitor regarding the nature of a system that produced such unrivalled results, the saintly Salesian replied: "I only know of two educational instruments—the rod and Holy Communion. I have now cast aside the rod."

In vain shall we exhort boys and girls to resist their unworthy impulses; in vain all our cautions against contracting the youthful plague of our times, with its microbes of selfishness, self-indulgence, and insatiable demand for pleasurable excitement, unless we saturate them with the antitoxin for these destroyers of all serious purpose in life. It may be questioned whether, viewed in its entirety, the long and continual struggle against unregenerate passions and inclinations be a much milder ordeal than the briefer, if more intense, agony endured once and for all by many who have shed their blood for the Faith. Be this as it may, at all events, the principle underlying some earnest words of St. Cyprian, in behalf of those exposed to fresh persecution from pagan emperors, applies equally to young souls in daily conflict with temptation. The African

Bishop is urging upon Pope Cornelius the claims of sincere penitents to be received speedily to full reconciliation, or "peace," with its accompanying readmission to the Holy Table, even though they were not sick or dying: "But now, indeed," says the Saint, "peace is necessary, not for the sick, but for the strong; nor is Communion to be granted by us to the dying, but to the living, that we may not leave those whom we stir up and exhort to the battle unarmed and naked, but may fortify them with the protection of Christ's Body and Blood; and, *as the Eucharist is appointed for this very purpose, that it may safeguard the receivers, that we may arm those whom we wish to be safe against the adversary, with the protection of the Lord's abundance. For how do we teach and provoke them to shed their blood in confession of His name, if we deny to those about to enter on the warfare the Blood of Christ?*" * These words—written A.D. 252 by the pen of a writer separated by only a lifetime from the Apostle St. John, might—as far

* Epist. LVII., addressed from the Council of Carthage to Pope St. Cornelius. Translation, from Ante-Nicene Christian Library, by Robert Ellis Wallis, Ph.D. T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh.

as concerns their estimate of the purpose of Communion—well be taken from the Decree of Pope Pius X., written seventeen centuries later. Their application to Catholic youth, “about to enter upon the warfare,” against the devil, the world, and the flesh, is unmistakable. Of what use is it to call out, “Be firm, fight bravely, and resist,” if we do not supply the necessary means indicated from the dawn of Christianity—constant recourse to the Bread of the Strong? The character of the enemy may have altered, he may have changed his tactics from overt violence to cunning; but the Christ-given means of defence remains unchanged. His word, “Except you eat. . . you shall not have life in you,” “shall not pass away.”

This is the remedy; this the saving armour. The forces of degeneration above enumerated sap the vigour of the supernatural life and threaten it with gradual extinction by mortal sin. That life must be powerfully safeguarded, and the protection expressly appointed by the Saviour and lover of souls is “the Bread which came down from heaven, that if any man eat of it he may not die.”* This pre-

* St. John vi. 50.

serving effect, however, is only guaranteed to those who eat according to the measure intended by Jesus Christ—that is to say, as often as the circumstances in which His Providence has placed them allows. What that measure is the Decree of Pope Pius plainly tells us in the words: “He Himself more than once, and in no ambiguous terms, pointed out the necessity of eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood *frequently.*” *

The frequent and, where possible, daily reception of Communion, falling short of an obligation under sin on the one side, and exceeding a mere pious suggestion on the other, is a “necessity” for safeguarding grace in the souls of the young—for the young even more than for others—albeit a “necessity” for “all the faithful.” The time of childhood and youth is noted for its love of pleasure and for its repugnance to the checks which duty and right principle put upon natural impulses.

Now that full six years have run since the publication and operation of the famous

* “*Necessitatem . . . crebro manducandi,*” etc. The English equivalent of “*crebro*” seemed to need underlining on account of its accidental omission in one of our translations.

Decree, a good deal of practical experience has been gleaned by active promoters of its doctrinal principles and disciplinary rules. Such experience cannot be without considerable value to anyone who realizes his duty of carrying out the commands of Christ's Vicar with regard to "Christian establishments of whatever kind for the training of youth," if he desires to acquit himself of his high responsibility in the best and safest way. Few men can have had a wider experience in the work than Père Jules Lintelo, S.J., whose publications on the present subject have received such exceptional praise from the Holy See and its representatives. His writings have the advantage of embodying the results of continual activity in the ministry of frequent and daily Communion. It therefore, seemed to the writer that he might be doing a more valuable service to the Catholic educator by offering him a volume largely indebted to Père Lintelo's "*Directoire Eucharistique des Maisons d'Éducation*," than by attempting an entirely original work. The present pages are partly a translation, and partly an amplification and free adaptation to British needs of the above-named Belgian work, made with the

kind permission of its author. They also include the fruit of such experience in promoting the Decree as has fallen to the lot of the present writer.

May these chapters—under the blessing of the Eucharistic Heart—help somewhat to kindle, or intensify the active zeal of priests and Catholic educators generally for the wider spread of the “salutary practice.”

The eucharistic triumph of Our Divine Lord over the world, as lying in embryo within the hearts of our Catholic youth, will form no mean contribution towards that universal restoration in Christ which our Pontiff set before himself as the one object of his reign.

“Simon Peter said to them: I go a-fishing. They say to him: We also come with thee.” May our reply to the present successor of Peter be as hearty! *Adveniat regnum tuum eucharisticum!* May this be our constant prayer.

F. M. DE ZULUETA, S.J.

MOUNT ST. MARY'S COLLEGE,
Chesterfield, England,
FEAST OF THE PATRONAGE OF ST. JOSEPH,
APRIL 28, 1912.

CONTENTS

DEDICATION

	PAGE
FOREWORD	3
CHAP.	
I. DAILY COMMUNION IN EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISH- MENTS. PROMOTION A DUTY.....	17
I. Rome's Word of Command.....	17
II. Reasons for Promoting.....	23
III. Practical Methods of Promotion.....	26
(A) <i>Right presentment of subject</i>	26
(B) <i>A General movement to be excited</i>	33
IV. Obstacles to be removed.....	39
(A) <i>Communion to be placed beyond disciplinary control</i>	40
(B) <i>Communion by Benchfuls</i>	42
(C) <i>Free choice of and access to Confessor</i>	43
(D) <i>Lengthy Devotions</i>	51
(E) <i>Arrangements for Boarders and Day- Scholars</i>	55
(F) <i>Elementary and other Government Schools.</i> A Children's Saturday Mass; How Teachers may help.....	59 60
Note: Wholesale Confessions of Children.	63
(G) <i>Unanimous action among authorities</i>	69
II. FEARS AND PREJUDICES.....	72
I. "Daily Communion does not suit every one." <i>Criticism of a chaplain's system</i>	72
(A) <i>Not for the younger ones</i>	73
(B) <i>Not for the less exemplary</i>	77
(C) <i>Not for matter-of-fact characters</i>	79
II. Dread of Sacrilegious Communions.....	81

CHAP.	PAGE
III. Parental Opposition. <i>Parents and Article VI. of "Quam Singulari"</i>	93
IV. "We must not violate children's liberty." "Compel them to come in." (St. Luke xiv 23).....	99
V. "We shall get to it by gradual stages"...	109
VI. "We must leave the initiative to the Con- fessor." Two systems compared.....	114
(A) <i>Gradual Initiation</i> , with individuals..	116
(B) <i>Creation of a General Movement</i>	116
VII. "People have lost their heads. They will come to their senses presently"! Offi- cial texts favour the promoter's sanity. Vague rumours of Papal censure.....	119
VIII. "It is not really the Pope's own idea," etc.	129
III. THE GREAT STUMBLING BLOCK—THE HOLIDAYS.	134
I. Importance of daily Communion during Holidays.....	136
II. Causes of falling-off.....	140
III. Remedies.....	144
(A) <i>Conviction</i>	144
(B) <i>Practice while at school</i> ; fallacy of arguing against daily Communion from decline during vacation.....	145
(C) <i>Exhortation before Holidays</i>	148
(D) <i>Fore-arming against difficulties</i> . Holi- day leagues.....	152
(E) <i>The Parents</i>	154
(F) <i>Co-operation of Clergy</i> ; difficulties with confessor.....	155
IV. The Return to School.....	157
IV. CAUSES OF FAILURE.....	160
Evidence of fruit obtained, witness of College authorities—Causes of failure: Unfavourable	

CONTENTS

13

CHAP.	PAGE
material an inadequate explanation; Half-hearted measures; Divided counsels; Being content with partial results; Missing the pith of the Decree, and consequent fallacy; A powerful cause, lack of facilities for Confession. A great enemy—early food. Objection met. The fatal “cup of tea.” Arbitrary limitation announcements, right and wrong ways of directing children. <i>N. B.</i> An unintelligible practice, lost Communions after the first. Spiritual Communion.....	160
V. SAMPLE ADDRESS BEFORE THE HOLIDAYS.....	175
VI. CONDITIONS FOR PROGRESS.....	183
1. The Priest himself.....	183
2. Fidelity to <i>Daily</i> Communion, because	
i. <i>The wish of Holy See</i>	186
ii. <i>Often necessary for keeping in grace</i> —	
Objection met by Card. Gennari.	
Four principles to cling to. If child	
wants to advance by stages, answers	
to be given. Objection: “May not	
mortal sin continue in spite of daily	
Communion?” Answers.....	187
III. Eucharistic Training, Elements of:	
(A) <i>Instruction</i>	194
(B) <i>Cultivation of Piety</i>	196
1. Visits to Blessed Sacrament.....	197
2. Devotion to Sacred Heart.....	198
3. Acts of self-denial.....	200
<i>Note: Communion, Self-denial and Social</i>	
<i>Work</i>	201
4. Preparation and Thanksgiving.	
Principles to be borne in mind,	
false views, “subjective” error..	203

CHAP.	PAGE
5. Teaching as to employment during Preparation and Thanksgiving . .	207
6. Methods with Elementary School Children	208
7. Prayer Books	208
IV. Perseverance	208
1. At School; <i>importance of regularity in attending confessional</i>	208
2. After leaving School	211
3. Advice to departing scholars	213
NOTE—Apostolate of Daily Communion	215
VII. COMMUNION AND THE CRISIS OF YOUTH	218
Leakage among Catholic youth. Frequent Communion, not enough valued	220
I. The <i>Moral</i> Crisis, sensual passion rife. <i>Question of Education in Purity</i> , theory of <i>initiation</i> . Its opponents. Three truths which it contains. Non-Catholic views defective. The difficulty of the problem. Instruction insufficient. Communion, the Secret of chastity. Noble task of Catholic educator	221
II. The <i>Religious</i> Crisis, environment not everything. Pius X and anti-Christian atmosphere, how the crisis may arise. Dangers to faith in England. Eucharist and formation of strong Catholic character. Remedy for decay of Christian spirit. Leo XIII's words. Catechism needs the support of Communion. Communion the best of apologetics. Study of religion must be accompanied with Communion . .	232
VIII. DAILY COMMUNION AND "CHARACTER"	242
Demand for "character;" "We want <i>men</i> ."	

CONTENTS

15

CHAP.

PAGE

Communion and manliness illustrated. Natural "energy." "Better to correct one's faults than multiply Communions:" Fallacy answered, answer confirmed by Holy See. Physical activity and sports, as a "natural barrier" against degeneracy. A discussion reviewed. Words of Leo XIII. 242

IX. FREQUENT COMMUNION AND VOCATIONS..... 253

Parents and Vocations. Frequent Communion supplies good basis for vocations. Its alleged "Undue influence." How will daily Communion affect vocations? Strength of character, sustained by the Eucharist, removes all causes hindering vocations..... 253

X. THE TASK OF NON-PRIEST EDUCATORS..... 264

Various kinds of educators here included..... 264

(A) *Preparation* for instruction in frequent Communion. Grasp of subject, bad teaching coming from lack of; familiarity with Papal Decrees, and eucharistic literature. Prayer for help..... 268

(B) *The Work:*

1. *Public*; full *doctrine* of *Daily* Communion as "normal diet;" exhortation to practise; to be based..... 268

(a) on desire of Jesus Christ, His love of men..... 269

(b) Our need of Him; recital of short prayers to Blessed Sacrament. Other aids. Position of non-Priest teachers..... 270

CHAP.	PAGE
2. In Private: <i>Precautions needed</i> . Respect for secret conscience. A gross abuse. Other errors. A privileged task.....	272

XI. ORGANIZATION FOR SPREADING DAILY COMMUNION..... 278

The Archconfraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, or "People's Eucharistic League. The "Pious Union for First Communion." Another scheme in U. S. A.....

APPENDIX

Encyclical of Leo XIII. on the Blessed Sacrament ("Mirae Caritatis"), May, 1902.....	285
Ejaculations and Practices in honour of the Holy Eucharist.....	322
List of Publications.....	354

THE DIVINE EDUCATOR

CHAPTER I

DAILY COMMUNION IN EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS—PROMOTION A DUTY.

I. ROME'S WORD OF COMMAND.

THE promotion of the practice of frequent and daily Communion is no mere counsel of perfection. It is commanded by the Vicar of Christ. The Decree "Sacra Tridentina Synodus," on daily Communion, is in a special sense his. For it has not merely received from him that measure of papal sanction which is attached to all decrees of the Roman Congregations, approved in what is called "common form." The approval possessed by this Decree has been given in "*special form*"—which means that the Pope has adopted it as his own; so that it comes to us as a Pontifical law for which the Pope makes himself personally responsible.

That *promotion* of frequent and daily Communion, as distinguished from reception of the same, is *ordered*, and not simply recommended, becomes plain from the following pronouncements. The quotations are taken from the official English Versions.

“Frequent and daily Communion is to be promoted. . . especially in ecclesiastical seminaries, where students are preparing for the service of the altar; AS ALSO IN ALL CHRISTIAN ESTABLISHMENTS OF WHATEVER KIND FOR THE TRAINING OF YOUTH”—(Decree “*Sacra Tridentina Synodus*” of Dec. 20th 1905, Article VII.)

“THOSE WHO HAVE CHARGE OF CHILDREN must take THE UTMOST CARE that after their First Communion the said children should APPROACH THE HOLY TABLE VERY OFTEN, and, if it be possible, EVEN DAILY, as Jesus Christ and our Holy Mother Church desire it. . .” (Decree “*QUAM SINGULARI*,” of Aug. 8, 1910, Article VI.)

“When preparing children for their First Communion they shall take special care to excite in their hearts, which are innocent and free from vain fears, a lively desire for daily Communion. Let them see that First Communion be received as soon as

children are capable of making it, that it be repeated, if possible, every day." (Instruction to Priest Members of the "Daily Communion League," canonically established in Rome by the Holy See, July 27, 1906.)

"In accord with Article I of the Decree (Sacra Tridentina Synodus) the frequent use of Holy Communion is recommended even to younger children, who, once they have been admitted to their First Communion. . . ought not to be hindered from its frequent reception, but rather encouraged thereto, to the rejection of a contrary practice anywhere prevailing." *

The full force of the above declarations will not be duly felt unless two points are clearly distinguished from one another, namely, how far daily Communion itself is obligatory, and how far those responsible for the care of children are bound to urge

* This was Rome's reply (Sept. 15, 1906) to those who doubted whether the Decree "On Daily Communion" was applicable to young children who had only just made their First Communion. That the expressions "frequent use" and "frequent reception" are meant to include the maximum of frequency, i.e., DAILY USE AND RECEPTION has been shown elsewhere. (See *Notes on Daily Communion*, p. 54, by present writer.)

them by all judicious means to communicate frequently or daily. As regards the first of these points, it is certain that no one is bound under pain of sin of any sort to go to Communion frequently or daily. Though one annual Communion at Easter is not the full extent of the Church's *desires* for her children, it is the full extent of her *command*. The law of the Easter Communion is the authoritative interpretation of Our Lord's precept to "eat the flesh" and "drink the blood" of the Son of Man, and He, knowing well what numbers of His children would be unable to receive Him frequently, abstained from *exacting* more.

But while the Church does not command her subjects to approach the Holy Table frequently, or daily, she does enjoin, upon those whom it concerns, the *duty* of pressing persons under their charge to the Sacred Banquet frequently and daily.

On this point, H. E. Cardinal Gennari—a foremost authority in Eucharistic matters writes in very decided terms. Referring to Article VII of the Decree "On Daily Communion," quoted above, he says, "Superiors, and especially spiritual directors who

neglect this duty, commit sin." He says the same of parish priests, confessors, and preachers, who are enjoined, in Article VI, of the same Decree, to exhort the faithful to this devout and salutary practice "frequently and with much zeal." * The same author has set forth the obligation, under pain of sin, imposed by the Decree "*Quam Singulari*," as regards the First Communion of children, upon priests, parents and teachers. Amongst these is the duty of parents, "to take the utmost care" that children who have made their First Communion shall approach the Holy Table VERY OFTEN, and if it be possible—EVEN DAILY." †

Catholics sometimes fail to realise that their duty towards the Church is not confined to accepting her doctrinal rulings as being the divinely appointed Teacher. She has also received from Christ legislative authority over the faithful and this imposes upon us the corresponding duty of *obedience* to her disciplinary laws. Evidently, laws

* Article of H. E. Gennari, in the *Monitore Ecclesiastico* Feb. 1909.

† Neglect of those in charge in this respect causes children to forfeit the chief fruit of the "*Quam Singulari*", which is to qualify them for an unbroken eucharistic life—the best protection for their innocence.

concerning the distribution of the Bread of Life—"whence the whole spirit of the supernatural life flows to the Church—" * are among the most important of laws. Disregard of them necessarily causes serious detriment to the spiritual vitality and energy of the entire Church. It frustrates the chief aim of our zealous Pontiff—namely, to regenerate human society in Christ and with Christ. Every priest, parent or educator, owns the dread power of raising the whole tone of Christian living by furthering the use of the Great Eucharistic Tonic, or of lowering it by neglecting to further its use according to the prescription of Christ's Vicar on earth. In the mouth of one who should do the latter, that petition of the "Our Father"—"Thy Kingdom come," so frequently upon his lips, would have a ring of insincerity about it.

It is mainly by entering our hearts constantly in Holy Communion that Our Lord gradually subdues those irregular passions which dispute with Him His rightful sovereignty.

* Brief of Pius X. to H. E. Card. V. Vannutelli, Westminster Congress, 1908.

II. REASONS FOR PROMOTING DAILY COMMUNION.

At Eucharistic Congresses of the past the question has often been raised as to the standard of frequency in communicating that should be proposed to the young and promoted among them. Some thought the proper limit to be *weekly* Communion, others urged weekly and daily Communion.

The Pope, however, tells us that it is daily Communion which is to be recommended alike to children and to the rest of the faithful. More than this, is it to be proposed to children even with more earnestness than to others: for christian educational establishments are mentioned among those places in which daily Communion is to be promoted "specially." It should be noticed how wide is the term here used. No distinction is made whether as to the age of the children, or their supposed vocation in after life, or their social status, or as to the measure of their advancement in virtue.

The reasons for which the decree makes special mention of such establishments are almost self-evident. If the Christian people

is to be brought back to the practice of daily Communion, clearly educational establishments offer the best ground on which to begin the movement. In these *fewer obstacles* are met with, souls are free from misgivings, and no difficulties arise from the nature of daily occupations. There, too, this reform of eucharistic practice *has the best chance* of extending and becoming firmly established. The children gathered from many different quarters will afterwards spread the teaching they have received, and the habits they have formed, while at school, in many circles, families, and parishes. Of those who have taken up the practice of daily Communion a certain proportion will remain faithful to it, all of them will have been trained in the true principles of the subject, the greater number will have experienced, at least for a time, the beneficial effects of frequent Communion, and will come back to it under the inspiration of grace, or when impelled to do so by more pressing temporal or spiritual needs.

A further reason is to be found in *the exceptional needs* of the supernatural life during childhood and youth. Temptations from without and from within beset

the child precisely at the period of life when it is weakest in body, reason, and will-power, and lacks all experience of life. In addition it has to grapple with the increased dangers incidental to our modern life. "Now-a-days" wrote Leo XIII. "men are consumed with an insatiable craving for pleasure; they fall a prey to a kind of sickly contagion from the very dawn of youth. But the divine Eucharist supplies us with an efficacious remedy for this frightful evil." * And Pius X. adds, "In these times when religion and the Catholic Faith are assailed from every quarter and love of God and piety leave so much to be desired, the practice of daily Communion should increase and be widely propagated." For these reasons the question of frequent and daily communion is a matter of life and death for Catholic youth. Thanks be to God, there are now fewer priests who hesitate to yield themselves to the impetus given them by the Church. People are

* Encyclical *Mirae caritatis*, 1902. This most beautiful document concerning the Blessed Sacrament—which may be regarded as the last will and testament of the great Pontiff, and the forerunner of the Eucharistic decrees of Pius X.—is but too little known by Catholics.

beginning to understand more fully the necessity of employing for the salvation of souls, not any sort of means, but the most efficacious means of all, and that the priest must dispense the Bread of Life lavishly, instead of avariciously hoarding it.

Those, however, who seek to obtain this desirable end, and to obtain it in educational institutions, find themselves confronted with various difficulties.

It will be useful, therefore, to consider the most practical methods for securing a wider realization of the desire of Jesus Christ and of His Vicar on earth.

The ensuing observations will be divided under two heads: *Practical Methods* for Training children to daily Communion: and the *Difficulties* to be met.

III. PRACTICAL METHODS OF PROMOTION

(A.) *Putting the Matter in its True Light.*

In order that daily Communion may be started under favourable conditions, and its continuance secured for the future, children must be impelled to the practice of *their own wills* and not simply by external pressure. Now there is only one way,

sanctioned by the laws of human nature, of producing this interior and spontaneous movement, and that is by instilling a clear and firm *conviction of mind*.

Children must come to regard daily Communion as an undoubted desire of Our Lord and of His Church, and as the normal spiritual diet of the devout Christian. On the other hand, they must be persuaded that the practice is almost morally necessary for keeping *constantly*, in the state of grace. The "chief reason" why Christians should communicate frequently and even daily, is that they "may derive strength to resist their sensual passions . . . and avoid those graver sins to which human frailty is liable." This principle, laid down in the Decree,* should stand out luminously in the child's mind as an incontrovertible axiom. Communion has, in the past, been too commonly put forward in the light of a pious work of supererogation, like any other; whereas it is necessary to the economy of the Christian life.† It is *par excellence*

* Decree, 3rd paragraph.

† Cf. "*necessitatem . . . crebro manducandi*," despite the fact that frequent or daily Communion is not commanded under pain of sin.

“the vital act”—as Père Monsabré so aptly called it in his 71st Conference.*

Nothing is sadder than to notice how the idea of the supernatural life has faded from the mind of so many Christians in our times. So few heed the teachings of S. Paul. Our *incorporation with Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit* in our souls—have not such expressions become to them mere obsolete and meaningless phrases? Have we priests, ourselves, insisted enough hitherto upon union with Jesus Christ by sanctifying grace? Or have we not rather been content to urge upon people the fulfilment of external duties, such as attending Mass, observing abstinence, resting from servile work, and the like? And thus we have been landed in an inconsistency that would have seemed monstrous to Christians of the early centuries. A man has considered himself a faultless Catholic—though not scrupling the while to live for weeks and months in mortal sin—just because he attended Mass, and other ser-

* Hence the mistake of representing Communion as suitable for Feast Days—as if it were not the Christian’s ordinary, daily fare, but rather a luxury of devotion for special occasions.

vices on Sundays, and engaged in certain social or charitable works.

Publications by the most competent writers have taught us how widely different was the ideal of early Christians. It was that of a holiness consisting of freedom from all grievous sin—a holiness to them almost unthinkable apart from Holy Communion.*

Let us convince ourselves thoroughly of this: We shall have made no headway until the connection between continuance in grace and Holy Communion presents itself to the child's mind with the force of the following deduction.

There can be no truly Christian life without the state of grace.

And there can be no constant state of

* See Vacandard, "La Pénitence publique dans l'Eglise primitive." Also, Battifol: "Etudes d'Histoire et de Théologie Positive" p. 44: "Baptism initiated then into sanctity, making them partakers of the life of Christ, and the Holy Eucharist maintained them in this supernatural state . . . Mortal sin with difficulty gained entrance into the first Christian communities." (Vacandard, p. 9 sq.) "Holiness was common enough for baptismal innocence not to be regarded as an exceptional privilege. (Battifol p. 46) "O Lord convert this bread into the Bread of Life, so that partakers thereof may remain incorruptible." *Acta Thomae, ibid.* With these words the Apostle blessed the bread after baptizing converts.

grace, above all in the young, without very constant use of Holy Communion.

In order to drive home the first of these propositions it is only necessary to remind them of the positive assertion of Our Lord: "He that eateth my flesh . . . hath life; except you eat . . . you shall not have life." * Then we know that—speaking normally—it is the desire of Him who instituted the Sacrament, that the Eucharist should be received daily, even as was the Manna of old, and as is the bread we use for our bodily support.† Many a child, alas, has experienced to its sorrow the truth of the above gospel law. Through not feeding upon the flesh of Jesus, they have fallen in the struggle; while others who have partaken freely of the Divine Food—above all, if they have done so daily—have proved themselves invincible under the fiercest assaults of temptation. Experience thus unites with the Gospel in the warning: If you would keep in the state of grace go to Communion.

As far back as the Eucharistic Congress of Paris, in 1888, Père Alet, S.J. urged this

* St. John vi, 54, 55.

† See "Eucharistic Triduum," pp. 39-43.

very point: "What is so necessary is not so much that we should persuade children to communicate frequently, as that we should make them understand, and, as it were, feel, that they need Communion and cannot afford to miss it. We should attach little value to efforts which fall short of this result, or which are not at least directed towards it."

Unfortunately, certain educators, unwittingly influenced by naturalism, have been known to rely far too much on natural means for forming the young. Of what avail are able explanations of the Catechism if delivered to souls dead in sin and lacking that unction of the Holy Spirit which gives a relish for divine things. What power have strength of character, principles of honour, duty, or self respect for checking passionate impulses? These may, no doubt, serve as some slight restraint, but a feeble one, at its best, if grace do not come to the soul's aid. "Man"—said the Catholic orator, Gabriel Belcastel—is a little slime quickened by the Spirit of God. If the spirit of God retire, nothing but the primitive slime remains." It is the function of Communion to convey to our souls this

spirit of God—this Christ-like life—for counteracting the evil tendencies of the slime of fallen human nature and raising us above them. Holy Communion brings home to the individual soul the fruits of the Incarnation—that elevation of man by union with God, through Jesus Christ, the God-Man. Our need is to form generations of young people living in the grace of God, not for a few days, or at intervals, but without a break for months and years. We want children who enter upon their youth after being thus preserved continually in innocence, and strong enough to grapple with the dangers of technical schools, of business life and of contact with the world. Given this, we shall have a body of Christians filled with a lively faith, men and women capable of self-denial, and serving as examples of purity and courage. Is this an empty dream? With frequent daily Communion—it certainly is not. Without It, it certainly would be. It is our business to multiply those isolated samples of spotless and dauntless virtue which we see around us, so that they shall form the greater number in christian society. But they will never form a majority unless Communion

comes to be far more frequently practised than it is at present. For, except the gospel laws be reversed, Communion must ever remain an indispensable condition for solid virtue and spiritual progress.

(B.) *A General Movement must be excited.*

Our aim must be to train the greater part of children in educational establishments to the use of daily Communion, and to produce a *general movement* towards the Holy Table.

Presently the means for protecting liberty of conscience will be duly pointed out; but that being supposed, we need not take alarm at the word "general movement." Nevertheless it acts as a scarecrow upon many priests animated with the best intentions in the matter of Communion.

"Let us work by degrees" say they "and choose guests for the Holy Table singly." Formerly, there was one solitary reason that could be urged in favour of this system, namely, that children were incapable of presenting the dispositions that used so commonly to be exacted from daily communicants.* But the Decree has done away

* Thus wrote Père Tesnière, and, after him, M. l'Abbé

with all such unjustifiable demands for more perfect dispositions, beyond those of the state of grace and a right intention. It moreover, requires preachers, parish priests, and confessors to exhort all classes of the faithful to approach the Holy Table, both in their public instructions and private direction, and to do this "frequently and with much zeal." If this is not creating "a general movement," what are we to call it?

It will be easily understood that the discreet enthusiasm which it is desired to produce should not be due to even indirect *compulsion* exercised upon the wills of the children, but to an *intellectual conviction* on their part and to the creation about them of a general atmosphere of practices and notions, which render easy to the child that which it otherwise sees to be beneficial. In the past, an impetus has too often been given in the opposite direction, and, strange to say, educators had no fear at all of *that*.

Guidon, in his excellent paper upon Communion read at the Congress of Bonne-Esperance, in 1905. But Père Tesnière afterwards retracted in most decisive terms all such restrictions, contained in his writings on Holy Communion, published before the appearance of the Papal Decree.

Numbers of children stayed away from Holy Communion, to the great injury of their souls, because to have acted otherwise would have excited remark. This was giving an impetus in the wrong direction, one which must be vigorously opposed and abolished.

It must be replaced by the right kind of impulse without which there is no such thing as collective training. What is the purpose of college life except to incline the young towards work, polite manners, respect, obedience, piety, and even sport. That which the careless or timid among them would never have done if left to themselves, this they are induced to do through the combination of favourable circumstances and by means of the atmosphere of suggestion created around them. Herein lies the *occasion* and not the *motive* deciding their action—a distinction to be carefully noted. It is the educator's duty to supply their latent good will with this occasion or opportunity. Similarly, it is the duty of the priest educator, or confessor, to help the child to discriminate between what is *primary* and what is only *secondary*, in the reasons inducing him to approach the Holy

Eucharist, and if need be—to assist him in righting his motive.*

Let the children be well instructed, let us explain to them the “desire of Jesus Christ,” the traditions of the Church, and the fruits to be obtained by Communion. At the same time, we should safeguard the freedom of their piety, and then there will be no fear of a dangerous kind of enthusiasm. Provided they be in the state of grace, and their prevailing motive for receiving be sound (right intention) any slight admixture of mere natural impulses that may introduce itself will not hinder the effect of the Sacrament.

Those heads of colleges are to be commended for their methods who promulgated

* “As for the intention, a zealous confessor will help his penitent to mend the same if not sufficiently pure, thus striving to improve his dispositions before Communion rather than keeping him away from it. (Père Besson, S.J., editor of the “*Nouvelle Revue Théologique*.”) Père Vermersch, S.J., writing about Religious, says: “One must carefully distinguish between a temptation or scruple, and a motive of real vanity or human respect. The prudent director will often need to consider what is the *prevailing element* in a motive; for some human alloy often mixes itself up with a substantially pure intention. Here it would seem enough if the person honestly thinks that, even independently of the inferior motive, he would still have preferred to go to Communion.”

the Decree in a solemn manner and inaugurated an entirely new order of things by holding a public Triduum of addresses on the subject of Communion. By thus pointedly calling the attention of the scholars to the wishes of the Pope, they excited their desires and broke through the ice of human respect and of contrary custom. Thus it happened in such cases that the very next morning after the Decree had been preached, the Communion rails were filled with large numbers of communicants and have never since been without them. Or rather, the number of the Communion has continued to mount up from year to year.

This public promulgation or preaching of the Decree is probably the only means of breaking down what may be called "caste distinctions." Where it has been omitted, the children have, in spite of all efforts to the contrary, continued to look upon daily Communion as the privilege of the more pious ones, and, consequently, have fought shy of seeming to claim membership with that class: or again, they regarded it merely as a remedy reserved for the curing of sinful habits.

What is the result of the opposite system?

Instead of bringing to Our Lord the greater number of those Who need Him, from the very first these souls, invited so cautiously one by one, respond to the invitation only with reluctance and difficulty. The chief obstacle to a more general use of Communion—namely, isolation—remains in full force and these selected souls will need much courage to resist the general current of rare Communion. As another crux, come the holidays. Several of those who have been won over so laboriously slip back again into the old rut, others leave school for good, and the whole work has to be started over again. In truth, what else could be expected from this progressive scheme of single recruits? Can it be said to meet the idea of the Holy Father's instruction: "Frequent and daily Communion is to be specially promoted in christian establishments of whatever kind for the training of youth?" One need not be surprised to find that experience has won over promoters of daily Communion to the method of "the general movement."

Père Lintelo adds one or two testimonies from heads of educational institutions; "Experience has taught that for setting about the task of executing the Decree in a

really practical manner a movement *en masse* is necessary in schools and produces the happiest results." * Another reports on the plan laconically, thus: "Drawbacks none — advantages inestimable." † "To obtain success with children you must work not by units, but with the mass—yet not masses of the ovine sort, but masses inwardly moved by the arguments and motives that a prudent zeal will suggest." ‡

IV. OBSTACLES TO BE REMOVED

The child must have a *clear conviction* as to its *need* of frequent and daily Communion. At the same time, it must enjoy full liberty of conscience. We shall see in a later chapter, however, that this liberty may be absurdly exaggerated, to the prejudice of that eucharistic education, which is necessarily involved in the Holy Father's command to "promote" daily Communion

* Abbé Guidon, Rector of the College of Binche, in his paper at the Tournai Eucharistic Congress, 1906.

† Abbé Mainguet, Chaplain to the School of Malonne, conducted by Brothers: in a message to the Congress of Metz, 1907.

‡ Père Lambert: "Le Prêtre-Educateur," Dec. 1908, p. 320.

in all educational establishments "in a special way."

*A. Communion to be kept entirely apart
from Discipline*

From the very first, the promoter must publicly and most emphatically impress upon his young audience, the notion that Communion is not an item of school discipline, and that authorities will not take cognizance of the frequency or fewness of a scholar's Communions, as if these formed part of the regulations of the house. Let him thoroughly imbue them with the thought that Holy Communion and its frequency is a matter between their conscience and God, the advice of confessors being added for their surer guidance. Hence masters, or others in charge, should on no account show greater favour to those who receive more often, nor any less favour to those who communicate more seldom. They should beware of throwing the number of its Communions in the face of a child who is guilty of exterior faults or idleness, as though such defects were incompatible with daily approach to the Holy Table. "And you are the person who is always wanting to run

to Communion!"—was the foolish taunt hurled at a child who had been detected in an habitual peccadillo, had previously begged to be allowed to communicate daily, but had actually *been refused*—as if the Papal Decree were so much waste paper! What wonderful things some holy persons manage to do! Superiors of establishments could not do better than strongly discountenance all allusions to the faults of scholars *in connection with* their practice of Communion. At least, if made in public, such comments are a big mistake as tending to perpetuate the old untheological delusion that venial sins are a hindrance to Communion. Weaker souls, too, would be frightened off from Communion by the thought of the constant guard they must exercise over their conduct in consequence. Among the young folk themselves all gossip as to how often this or that companion goes to Communion, or to Confession, should be boycotted. They should be trained to consider such subjects far too private and sacred for discussion and as reserved to the confessor's province.

B. Going up to the Altar by Benches

A second precaution, much recommended at Eucharistic Congresses, is that—at the moment for Communion—the young people should not be cleared out by whole benches. Some have objected that this system is necessary for preserving good order—a feeble objection compared to the importance of securing, not greater liberty only, but greater *spontaneity* of approach. There can be complete order without perfect symmetry of movement. The requirements of order would seem to be sufficiently satisfied by arranging that those approaching the altar shall go by one avenue (or by one side of it, if there be but one passage) and those returning, by another, and instructing the children not to crowd forward when there are evidently enough communicants to keep the rails *well* supplied—as indeed they should be.*

* The benefit of the above precaution and the demands of the disciplinarian seem fairly well reconciled by a plan adopted in some establishments. One of the elder students takes his stand at the openings of the benches, in turn, beginning with the topmost bench, and moderates the flow of communicants towards the altar rails. There is no emptying of whole benches, as a matter of order. Those only leave them who intend to communicate; the

*C. Freedom in Choice of, and of Access
to, the Confessor.*

It will not be possible to introduce, or to maintain daily Communion in a college, boarding school, or institution, unless the children have the *greatest possible freedom* in the choice of their confessors, and also the maximum of facilities for going to them. The first condition presents no difficulty in establishments managed by Priests. There, a choice can be easily furnished. In institutions conducted by Brothers or Nuns who have one single chaplain and where the number of children is large, it seems most desirable that at least *two* regular confessors should be available. It is seldom that one and the same priest, whatever be his gifts, will enjoy the confidence of a number of boys or girls in the same degree. The practice of calling in special or "extraordinary" confessors from time to time is much to be commended and further protects the freedom of young consciences.*

others remain behind in their seats. But perhaps even the aforesaid moderator might well be dispensed with.

*The following passage gives point to the above precautions: "You have noticed on the railway those rows of coupled trucks. . . . When the foremost one starts

Facility of Access. This point is of very great importance. It should be possible to go to Confession, or to see the confessor, without the intervention of vexatious disciplinary formalities and checks. A child should be able to "slip in" to the confessor without attention being drawn to the fact, or the penitent being put through the ordeal of "giving notice beforehand," or asking leave here, there, and everywhere. There is no need to point out the snare that such restrictions might prove with timid and bashful characters. In some institutions, a confessor attends his confessional just before or during the Mass, and it is understood that any child may leave his place for purposes of Confession without having to ask any questions or having any asked

moving the rest start after it; when the leading truck stops the rest stop. I confess that this is the picture that comes before my mind on certain days when at Communion-time, I see you all come out of your benches in a row, or else remain motionless in your places. Then I ask myself whether there may not be at least one among you who is saying to himself half consciously: "The others are going to Communion to-day, so I will, also" or else "The others are not going, so neither will I?" I beseech you, my son, do not descend so low. Do not be a machine, but a man!" *Texier*, "La Piété chez les Jeunes." p. 214.

him or her. This is a most desirable plan. It gives pupils the opportunity of getting some anxiety settled or of cleansing themselves from some fault. If they cannot do this, for want of a confessor or on account of an over rigorous discipline, they will miss their Communion at the risk of falling into a real sin or into graver ones. The salutary habit of Communion which has been adopted thus suffers interruption, and lost ground has to be laboriously recovered. For a preference, the confessional should be situated in some sheltered corner out of view, or else right at the bottom of the chapel. The confessor should take occasion from such confessions to show the child how to dismiss fears or scruples that are groundless, and not to allow itself to be hindered after wisely deciding to receive Communion, except upon strict theological principles. These require that a sin should be clearly mortal for it to impede Communion.* If the penitent be properly in-

* Disregard of the above principle is one of the great hindrances to Daily Communion among good Catholics. Promoters of the practice should plainly instruct people that there is no necessary connection between Confession and Communion. See "Confession in relation to Frequent Communion," English "Messenger of the Sacred Heart for August, 1909, "Messenger Office," Wimbledon.

structed on this point, there will be no unnecessary increase in confessional work. And thus the spirit of the Decree upon Confession as a condition for gaining Plenary Indulgences (February 14, 1906) will be more fully carried out, which makes it plain that the frequency of Confession is not expected to increase in proportion to the frequency of Holy Communion.*

A DIFFICULTY

Much emphasis is laid, in these pages, upon the importance of free access to the confessor, nor is there any intention here of withdrawing one tittle of what has been urged concerning this point. And yet, it is possible that the great facility for confession, enjoyed by the young in boarding institutions having a choice of confessors, may become an occasion of abuse—unless confessors are vigilant. Say, that a scholar has unfortunately contracted some grievously sinful habit and is following the wise

* "If we desire that daily, or at least frequent Communion, should be more than an utopian dream, we must, while procuring that frequent Communion shall flourish, strive to diminish the number of unnecessary Confessions." (Canon Antoni, whose work on Frequent Communion received special commendation from Pius X.)

advice given him to seek a remedy in literal daily Communion. Now—as it has been pointed out elsewhere—the cure may not, usually will not, come all at once, in spite of the penitent's good will. The necessity for confessing rather frequently, in order to recover God's grace and not interrupt the daily Eucharistic treatment, may continue for a certain time. Yet, if the treatment has been going on for months, and there is no sign of any improvement whatever, it seems necessary to look into the matter. It is just in a case like this that an abuse might be going on. The very ease with which absolution can be had may tempt a youth to dispense himself from real effort of will for overcoming himself. What is to be done? While, on the one hand, it would seem fatal to limit his freedom of confession, yet, on the other, the state of things calls for solicitude. One may ask: Does the confessor take sufficient pains? Does he, for instance, gently and kindly call the penitent's notice to the lack of all amendment or, if there be some, but disproportionate to the means of grace employed, does he seize upon it for the purpose of praising the progress so

far made and stimulating to yet greater effort? Does he point out to him, or her, that Sacraments do not exempt us from the duty of shunning occasions of sin—such as undesirable friendships, too great indulgence of the various senses, loose talk, and the like? If he content himself with receiving stereotyped confessions of mortal sin without uttering a word of counsel or instruction, or attempting, however, tenderly, to probe the penitent's dispositions, this might afford ample explanation of the unsatisfactory state of things. It might be objected, of course, that there is no need for anxiety as regards dispositions, that the very fact of the penitent's putting himself to the pains of such frequent confession is in itself sufficient proof of his, or her, good will. There is much to be said for this view—though there would be much more if it were a penitent living in the world that had to go out to church, and having obstacles to surmount in order to get there. In Catholic boarding schools everything will be made easy for young people. Still the words of the Decree remain: given the state of grace. “It is impossible that they (the communicants) should not gradually

emancipate themselves". . . In the case before us this emancipation is not even in sight, and this after long treatment. Where else can we look for an explanation of the failure except either in neglect of necessary precautions on the part of the penitent, or in defective guidance on the part of the confessor? In view of the *ex-opere operato* action of the Sacrament upon a soul in grace, mere carelessness in preparation and thanksgiving would hardly account for the completeness of the failure.

There is another danger of quite a different kind incidental to this great facility of access to confessors, indispensable though that facility is, unless care be taken by those responsible for the instruction of the young. The golden words of Canon Antoni have been quoted on another page: "If daily Communion is not to be an Utopian dream, we must strive to diminish the number of unnecessary confessions," i.e., confessions of venial sins only. This is evident, not merely on account of the impossible burden that would be put upon confessors, but for another reason deeply affecting the maintenance of frequent Communion after leaving school. These young people will

certainly not be able to run off to confession as often, or as easily, as they could during the period of their school-training. Yet, if a habit formed at school has made this constant recourse to confession a sort of spiritual necessity to them, then—when it can no longer be kept up—Communion will decline, and just when increased dangers and temptations make the Eucharist all the more necessary for their souls. Here, too, an objection may be urged. A sacrament—it will be said—is always a sacrament—a means of extra grace to the young. Whether necessary or not, confession increases their store of spiritual strength. This is of course, beyond dispute. But where are we to draw the line? On the same principle, one ought to encourage recourse to confession several times a day. We are here supposing that these frequent confessions are ones of devotion, and not obligatory. Now, either the penitent fully realises that they are unnecessary because no *mortal* sin has been committed or he does not. If he does not, it is a duty to instruct him on the point. If on the contrary, he knows it quite well, then this constant confession tends towards developing

scrupulosity, and deprives the young of useful practice in making up their own consciences for themselves. Yet this is a point of spiritual training most important for those who will not always have a confessor to run to in every conscientious emergency.

In other words, we should attend more to the *primary* purposes of the two Sacraments—Penance and the Holy Eucharist. The primary object for which Our Lord instituted the Sacrament of Penance—is—as the Council of Trent shows—the remission of *mortal* sin committed after Baptism. The object of the Holy Eucharist is to maintain continually the life of grace in the soul. Our eagerness for confessions, therefore, had far better be concentrated upon establishing the use of the Sacrament which was expressly ordained for securing that which is our main concern with the young namely, their maintenance in the *uninterrupted* possession of God's grace. That being secured, Our Lord can carry out His designs for their ulterior sanctification unhindered.

D. Lengthy Devotions to be Avoided.

Here we come to a highly practical point. Perhaps those in charge of the studies,

with the fear of that Great Juggernaut—"Exam"—before their eyes, will be anxious lest eucharistic piety should curtail precious study-time. Granting that this were a necessary consequence of daily Communion, there would be no room for hesitation. It would be the studies that must be so far sacrificed to the imperative need the students have to live constantly in God's grace, to become more closely united to Christ—and, in short, to be more truly Christian. For is not this the primary object of our Christian education? All else is, after all, secondary.

But, thanks be to God, there is no call for such a sacrifice. Experience teaches us that the studies flourish most in those institutions where Communion is most practised.*

It must be so—if we believe that word of Our Lord "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice and the rest shall be added unto you." Communion inasmuch as it fosters purity of soul and the spirit of self-denial, cannot but exercise the most favourable influence in the direction of industry and clearness of intelligence

* See *La fréquentation des Sacrements et l'Education* par un père de la Compagnie de Jésus: Desclée: Chapt. 5. "Communion and Success in Studies."

—the two requisites for progress in study. But though it be foolish to regard the moderate time devoted to Communion as a hindrance to study, there are other reasons urging us to guard against prolonging that time. Nothing can be better than the following wise remarks of Père Cros, S.J.—a specialist in this subject: “‘My yoke is sweet’—says Our Blessed Lord ‘and my burden light.’ Hence this yoke and this burden must vary according to the condition, the age, the character of those who have to bear it. A child may be pious. Still it is the piety of a child, and soon gets out of breath. One may choke it while thinking to nourish it. Jansenism understood this right well, and crushed the budding piety of children under mountains of pious exercises. All this seeming perfection is a delusion, a snare of the Devil. The ‘better thing,’ in this matter, is often an enemy to good. Why exact from a child what perhaps we fail to do ourselves? We know from experience that the people who persevere best in bearing the yoke of Jesus Christ in after life are those who have known and loved its sweetness from their childhood.”*

* Cros, S.J. *Le Confesseur de l'Enfance et de la Jeun-*

There can be little doubt but that the additional formalities with which Communion used to be surrounded sprang from its very rarity and drew their inspiration from doctrines—now condemned—which demanded other dispositions of the communicant besides the state of grace and a right intention. We must not cling to these views in practice now that we have given them up in theory. For this reason, the Decree prudently rules that Preparation for Communion and Thanksgiving after it are to be proportioned “to the strength, circumstances, and duties of each one.” As a well-known theologian, Père Jules Besson,* puts it. “These commendable practices should be an aid to daily Communion, and not a deterrent.” Following the same line of thought, the children should be made to understand that the morning’s Communion is not a sort of vise, holding them tight for the rest of the day and hindering them from giving vent to their childish spirits and natural love of fun. “Even boisterous games will do no hurt to piety. esse, 3d. Edit. p. 685. See also “My burden is light,” “Messenger of the Sacred Heart” (for England) June, 1912.

* Editor of the “Nouvelle Revue Theologique.”

Even were it otherwise, it would be better, if necessary, to forego the accidentals of piety rather than jeopardise the essential interests of the child's soul by making frequent use of the Sacraments hateful, or at all events less attractive. Jesus Christ is not at all exacting towards children, but, on the contrary, all sweetness."*

For far too long a time anxiety to obtain perfect Communions has stood in the way of less perfect ones. People forgot that the latter are, for the immense majority of Christians, the only way of arriving by degrees at more perfect ones. Before thinking of producing in souls the fuller life of Jesus we must first preserve and sustain essential life itself. Existence takes precedence of well-being.

*E. Arrangements for Boarders and
Day-scholars.*

The following are different arrangements adopted in institutions or colleges, at home or abroad. (a) In some establishments the Mass comes immediately after the recital in public, or private, of Morning Prayers. The students go to Communion at the

* Cros. *ibid.*, p. 329.

“ Domine non sum dignus,” after the priest, and stay on for a short time after the end of Mass to make their thanksgiving. This appears a fairly practical system and causes small loss of time. (b) In other places, where the numbers are very large, one or two assistant priests begin to distribute Holy Communion after the consecration. A compromise between these two plans would be to have the Communion after that of the priest, but to enlist the aid of one or two assistant priests in order to expedite the distribution. (c) Elsewhere, the students, or inmates, who are going to Communion get down to the Chapel in good time so as to make a moderate preparation and then go to Communion before the Mass. As their thanksgiving is made during the Mass, no loss of study time is incurred either by communicants or non-communicants. This appears to be the better system, all things considered.* It might be a further improvement to choose for the Morning Prayers devotions of an eucharistic character. In this way some direct preparation for Com-

* Where the Communion is made *in* the Mass, those who have not communicated should be retained in the Chapel, and not be allowed to use the short time of Thanksgiving for external occupations.

munion would be secured even in the case of those who had not reached the Chapel till Morning Prayers were due to start. Then eucharistic piety would be fostered among those who have not yet adopted daily Communion.

Day Pupils. In some Day Schools mentioned by Père Lintelo, where the students had already to attend a special Mass in the College as a matter of discipline, the hour for this Mass has been put earlier, thus facilitating Communion and allowing an opportunity for getting to Confession. Then the scholars return home for breakfast, or can get it at the college for a nominal payment. This plan might serve in small towns where distances are not great. Otherwise, the double walk before breakfast and the return journey to the college for class would be a serious obstacle. Another plan is to leave it to communicants to attend Mass at the nearest church to their homes in place of coming to the regulation Mass at the college, and requiring those who enjoy this freedom to notify to the authorities where they have been to Mass. (N.B. Where they have been to *Mass*, not whether they have been to Communion

or not, for, as already pointed out, frequent or daily Communion is to be regarded as *outside the domain of discipline*.) No doubt this plan gives a loophole for "dodging" of which a boy here and there who wishes to shirk even the hearing of Mass, may avail himself. That cannot be helped: and it is no reason for depriving a good many others who desire to receive the Holy Eucharist and will derive great profit from doing so. To oblige all and sundry to come first to an early Mass and then return home for breakfast, and then come back in time for Class, would in many instances be to render morally impossible, by disciplinary rules, that which we strongly urge by means of preaching. It would be demanding a heroism of young people such as their teachers might fight shy of under like conditions. Another point, concerning Schools for Girls, seems worth mentioning. Communicants should not be required to *dress* differently to the others. It seems even more objectionable to make distinctions between those who are going to Communion and those who are not by supplying the former only with a veil. Let *all* wear veils, or else all hats, as may be preferred.

*F. Elementary or other Government
Schools.*

It appears necessary here to treat of a matter which naturally did not enter into the scope of Father Lintelo's "Directoire?" namely, How to promote frequent and daily Communion among the poorer children who attended our elementary schools which are under Government—our denominational or "unprovided" schools. We must remember that Communion once a week is not what is understood by "frequent" Communion. But, where the latter cannot be secured, there appears no reason whatever why elementary school children should not be trained to receive Communion every Sunday in the year, as well as on Holydays of Obligation. But is it possible to obtain more than this? The difficulty of course, is the breakfast and the need of arriving punctually at school. In country places, where the population is usually scattered, it certainly appears out of the question to expect children to come to Mass and Communion, return home to breakfast, and then trudge back again to school—quite apart from consideration of weather and of the time needed for these marches

and counter-marches. But it will be easy for the priest to know of any particular children who live close to the church and to the school. These might be able to approach Holy Communion, if not daily, at all events two or three times a week, provided the time of Mass were suitably fixed and Mass began punctually—two points of importance in the present matter, for adults who have work or business before them, as well as for children. It is not uncommon to hear the complaint: “I cannot go to Communion during the week, for Mass is too late or unpunctual, and five or ten minutes more or less make all the difference to me.”

CHILDREN'S MASS ON SATURDAYS.

In the interest of other school-children, who labour under disadvantages, the following plan for securing at least two Communion a week is well worth a trial. Let there be a *special Mass for the school-children* every *Saturday*, with hymn-singing, just as there is very commonly on Sundays. For Saturday is not a school-day under the rules of the Education Department, and thus the difficulty of the double journey to the home

for breakfast, and then back to school, does not arise on that day. The children can go to Communion again on the Sunday.

HOW TEACHERS MAY HELP.

A great deal will depend upon whether the teachers duly realise the apostolic nature of their mission as *Catholic* educators. It is quite possible for them to view their position simply as a business contract, by which in return for certain definite services, they receive a certain remuneration. They may be tempted to yield the pound of flesh exacted by the Education Department and rest content. That, surely, is a low estimate to form of their work as Catholic teachers, which is in a very true sense an *apostolic* one. Without adding greatly to their obligatory burdens, they may do much towards securing the fulfilment of the "desire of Jesus Christ and of the Church"—as the Decree calls it—and promote the practice of frequent, if it cannot be daily, Communion among their charges. An occasional word of advice and encouragement will help. But what will prove more effectual than words, in *their own example* in practising frequent or daily

Communion themselves, coupled with fervent prayer for the spread of this "salutary practice." An ejaculation to the Blessed Sacrament at school-prayers, couched, for example, in the form of a "Spiritual Communion" would be another way of promoting the holy cause, especially if its *purpose* were explained to the children in a few brief words. It would be difficult to under-rate the trying nature of a schoolteacher's labour, and the many provocations to speak hastily to troublesome children. Hence it is well to call the attention of this most meritorious profession to the importance of avoiding such forms of rebuke as tend to alienate from Communion.* Still more must they beware of exceeding their authority by putting limitations upon the eucharistic freedom of children. This is not an imaginary danger. Even a religious teacher has been known to tell children: "Mind, you must not go to Communion without telling me first." Even the Confessor cannot make reference to him an indispensable condition for daily Communion, though, the intending communicant is certainly *recommended* in the Decree to seek the *advice*,

* See above, p. 40.

not "*permission*," of the priest in the matter, as an act of virtue which will add *greater* prudence and *more abundant* merit to his practice of frequently, or daily receiving Our Lord.

WHOLESALE CONFESSIONS OF CHILDREN.

The subject of "free access" to confessors, dealt with elsewhere, suggests the consideration of another practice which might bear the appearance of the opposite extreme—namely, compulsory confession.

Marching School-Children to Confession. In many parishes a day is fixed—perhaps once a month, or once a fortnight—upon which the school children are to be conducted *en masse*, or in successive sections, to the church for Confession.

It has occurred to some theological minds that this practice is barely defensible—that it virtually forces children to confess, quite irrespective of their spiritual state, and whether they wish it, or not—that such a system tends to produce insincere confessions, or ones lacking the needful dispositions of sorrow and purpose of amendment. It has been noticed, too, that among those adopting this seemingly compulsory

method there are some who, rather inconsistently, look askance at active promotion of daily Communion among the young as being a violation of juvenile freedom.

What is to be thought of this herding of children to the confessional? To start with general principles: We are never justified in compelling another to do what he is under no obligation of doing. Thus, as noticed elsewhere, Cardinal Gennari—a strong advocate of daily Communion—points out, with reference to Article VI. of the “*Quam Singulari*,” that as children are not *bound* to communicate “very frequently” or “daily,” parents—though bound to train them to the practice, are not authorised to drive them to the altar against their wills.

Another principle. No one is ever bound to go to confession unless conscious of *clear mortal sin*; nor apart from Communion—is there any law binding the faithful to confess mortal sin within a given period—the Easter Duty, of course excepted.

To come now to these bodies of children, marched to Confession by their teachers, according to the instructions of the priest in charge, and marshalled in benches out-

side the confessional. No one, surely, has any right to suppose that all those children are in mortal sin! * And even if they were, they would not be bound—however desirable the thing might be—to confess there and then. Can this system be defended? No doubt it can—in the following way.

It can be said, on the other side, that it is of the gravest importance, for the spiritual welfare of the young that they should be trained early to the frequent use of the Sacraments, and they cannot be expected at their time of life to take the initiative. There appears no other practicable way of giving this necessary training to a number of children than leading them to the confessional at stated times. If it be urged that this benefit is only secured by doing a previous wrong to the child's liberty, it may be answered that young children are in a state of tutelage and are incapable

* The opinion has even been hazarded—as the result of experience with children—that the average child is incapable of committing a *formal* mortal sin till a much later age than is usually supposed, owing to lack of *realisation* of its gravity, though theoretically it knows the Catechism distinction between mortal and venial sin.

of managing their own spiritual affairs. In a similar way, civilised legislation, while it recognises the rights of children in some matters, disregards them in others, and makes the young dependent upon the will of their responsible guardians. The wrong done to the children in the matter of these confessions is apparent rather than real.

Still, a distinction must be made, according to the age and discretion of the children. Hence it would be wrong to carry this system of marching the children to confession into the higher "standards" or classes. As they advance in age, greater liberty should be given to them. And with the younger and older alike, preference for one confessor rather than another—where a choice is possible must be carefully respected. This is no unnecessary caution. For school authorities have been known to insist upon grown up girls in their employ going to one particular confessor under penalty of dismissal. This, of course, is a serious and very dangerous abuse, entirely opposed to the spirit of the Catholic Church, and may be fruitful of bad confessions.

To come, now, to the aspect of the above question which chiefly concerns the sub-

ject of this book. It is this. These confessions in crowds, whatever be their merits, should *not be repeated oftener on account of the greater frequency of Communions desired by the Holy See*. Thus, for example, if, previously, these School Confessions had been fixed at once a month, or once a fortnight (i.e., for the same children) the fact that the children now go more frequently to Communion should not entail their being marched to *Confession* more often than before—say, once a fortnight, or once a week. It stands to reason that, speaking normally, the *need* of confession must become *less*, and not greater, according as the children make a freer use of the Great Preservative from mortal sin. Then, again, a mistaken notion that such increased *hearing* of confessions is inseparable from the spread of frequent or daily Communion, tends to damp the zeal of a hardworked priest in advocating the practice. On the contrary, for the success of the movement “we must strive to diminish the number of unnecessary confessions.” *

To persuade a child that Our Lord’s yoke

* Canon Antoni—in his work on Daily Communion—commanded by Pius. X.

is sweet and His burden light, and to attract it towards the Holy Table, it is most important to disassociate needless burdens from its idea of Communion. Otherwise we shall never bring up a race of constant communicants and—stalwart Catholics. When the restraint of school is removed, Communion will be regarded only as one of the many disagreeables of education which are happily things of the past. Now, it can hardly be denied that in the case of many little children, Confession—made under the same conditions as that of older folk—with the darkness, the invisibility—to a kneeling mite—of the priest, and other solemn adjuncts of the occasion—is a somewhat trying ordeal. Not every priest is gifted with the same sympathy for childhood, or the happy knack of putting the child-penitent at once at its ease. The over-doing of confessions is one of the greatest hindrances to a wider adoption of frequent and daily Communion.

We have been speaking here of confession in masses, forming part of school routine. But the giving of *frequent* and *well-advertised* opportunities for free confession of brief duration—is a help and not

hindrance to frequent Communion. But of this we have spoken in another place.

It has not been thought necessary, in a work like the present, to discuss the precautions a confessor needs to take, under the system of wholesale confessions, in hearing the children—some of whom may come into the confessional like sheep, merely because it is their “turn” to enter.

G. Unanimous Action among Authorities.

It belongs to the head of the house or institution to see to the maintenance of *unanimity* and *perseverance* among the staff in working for the great end in view. In his “Directoire,” Father Lintelo provides us with a sample of the counsels given to one who was promoting daily Communion in a certain educational establishment: Try to bring it about that, from the Superior down to the porter, every member of the staff shall tell the weak, the giddy, and the fractious ones: “You need Communion greatly in order to become good. Come now! give it a trial: stick to it, and after six months of Communion you will become a nice little rabbit, not perhaps quite white, but gray, at all events. See that com-

municants have not to wait for their breakfasts so that the workers may not lose a minute of their time. Let one Confession suffice for many Communions, etc. Let every one in the house be a Forerunner of the Lamb of God and let no one belie that word of Jesus Christ 'My burden is light.' "

Such were the counsels. But unfortunately every one did not speak to the scholars in the same sense.

Those poor children had to fight against the Devil, against their innate slothfulness, and—as a climax—they were hampered by the opposition of those who should have led them to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Only too much justification was afforded for the subsequent comment made by the same counsellor upon this state of affairs: "Take it as certain that if children do not go to Communion (the same may be said of all Christians) the fault is not theirs, but our own. We bar and barricade the road. It is to us priests that the Lord cries out: 'Hinder them not from coming to Me.' "

Our Lord has appealed to us once more by the mouth of His Vicar on earth. Let us all be eager to bring Him the hearts of

the young to be quickened and transformed by His grace. But we shall never put the needful energy and zeal into our work unless, like Dom Bosco, we are ourselves intimately convinced that, in truly Catholic education that *everything depends upon Communion*. "Tout est là."

There are two orders of truths concerning Communion—those relating to its frequency and those dealing with the disposition needed. Of these two, the latter have been almost universally exaggerated in the past, and the minds of the faithful are still penetrated to a large extent by these ancient prejudices. But the former—regarding frequency—are still unknown to many. It is upon them, consequently, that we need to insist with greater emphasis.

St. Patrick's
FORT WILKINSON, CALIF.

CHAPTER II.

FEARS AND PREJUDICES

A SPECIAL section will be reserved to the subject of Holiday-time, in its relation to Communion. In the present chapter we shall deal with certain difficulties besetting the path of educators filled with the best intentions.

I. "DAILY COMMUNION DOES NOT SUIT EVERY ONE."

People would now hardly venture to put their objections in the above form. It contradicts too flatly the express teaching of the Papal Decree.* But, in practice, do not people often act as though there were something to be said for the above view? Thus—for instance—astonishment is ex-

* "And His Holiness being most earnestly anxious . . . that the faithful be invited to partake of the sacred banquet as often as possible, and even daily . . .".

"I. Frequent and daily Communion, as a thing most earnestly desired by Christ Our Lord, and by the Catholic Church, should be open to *all the faithful*, of *whatever rank and condition of life*; so that *no one*," etc. (See Official translation of Decree.)

pressed at hearing frequent and even daily Communion recommended without distinction to little children who have made their First Communion and are instructed in the dispositions needful. People are surprised at seeing so many children—as many children as adults, perhaps—approaching Our Lord's Table.

Be it our business to destroy such vestiges of ancient prejudice as the following—traced by the pen of a certain chaplain. They are quoted (anonymously) by Père Lintelo because they reflect the notions of others. For the same reason, the passage is reproduced in these pages.

A. Daily Communion is not suitable for the younger ones.

B. Nor for the less exemplary.

C. Nor for the more matter-of-fact characters.

A. “*Not for the younger ones.*” “As for children under fourteen or fifteen, I allow daily Communion to some of them. But I watch carefully over the fruit they derive and the fervour they bring to It—that is, fervour not of a sentimental but of a practical kind. With regard to the rest of them, I try to spread out their Communions as prudently as possible, and now and again I

put daily Communion before them as the true ideal to be aimed at, in order to kindle their fervour."

As the context plainly shows, this priest adopts the said system, not because he doubts that the words "Suffer the little ones" etc., were addressed to all of these, but the better to safeguard the "right intention" and the fruitfulness of Communions.*

All the same this plan of action is open to more than one objection. First, it ignores the fundamental principle according to which daily Communion is the *normal diet* intended by Christ for every soul that partakes of It in the state of grace and with a right intention, whatever be the person's age. If the right intention be lacking then, of course, a Christian has no more right to two or three Communions in the week than to seven. The second objection

* One notices a regrettable tendency in some eucharistic publications, printed long after the appearance of the Pope's Decree, to drag certain more perfect dispositions under the "right intention," thus virtually adding to the *two* only necessary conditions laid down in the Papal Document. It is surely unnecessary thus to improve upon the prudence of the Holy See. The Reformers objected to Confession as "leaving nothing to the mercy of God." Well let us leave a little to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and His watchfulness over the operation of our Lord's Sacraments.

is that the door is opened wide to arbitrary treatment of souls. Our chaplain *strives* (who can tell if he succeeds?) to spread out Communion *as prudently as possible*. But who can promise that his confrère in the ministry will form the same judgment as to what is advisable? And if he would not, the child passing from one confessor to the other will find the system of his spiritual nourishment chopping and changing about at the will of his guide. And what absolute and certain criteria does the conscience of this particular child supply requiring that he should be allowed to receive Communion at one time, and at another not? But we come now to the third and far graver objection. Can the chaplain feel sure that he has sufficiently provided for the needs of all these souls? May not some of them fall into sin just because the Bread of Life is being too sparingly broken to them? This is a danger all the more to be feared with those who are "less deserving." Our duty is to emulate the motherly anxiety of the Church. She desires the little ones to come by *preference*. Enthusiasm, it is urged, lies open to suspicion. Be it so—or, to be more exact, it is only enthusiasm in an indiscreet form that we

need guard against. But let us rejoice at the sight of children answering so readily to the call of their Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. If they respond in large numbers, this is because His appeal has found a readier echo in innocent hearts, and these young folk are not hampered by false shame or evil passions.

Then, as for the right intention, how easily it can be developed, more especially in children. The confessor business is not to deprive them of Communion on an *a priori* fear that the intention may be wanting, while it certainly is his business to help them in forming one if lacking. A little thought will make this clear.* Then, how does our good chaplain reconcile the above with what he writes elsewhere on the subject of First Communion. He says: "It is too often forgotten now-a-days that passions jump into a motor-car without waiting for any particular age; and even were these children so many little angels do they not need to strengthen themselves against struggles to come?"

These are indeed excellent principles never to be forgotten.

* A point well brought out in "daily Communion Means to a Right Intention," by Père Barbe S.J. Reims, chez Lefèvre.

B. "Not for the less exemplary." "Occasionally, too, I am led to reduce the number of Communion when the industry, piety, or behaviour of children are less satisfactory. Without this, it seems to me that a certain scandal would be caused by the contrast between the frequency of Communion and the lack of piety, of application to study, or of steadiness in conduct."

Let the following comments suffice:

1. Our chaplain is demanding more than the Church does. She does not require as a condition daily Communion that previous ones should have produced fruit in any particular measure, no matter how numerous the Communion may have been. She exacts the state of grace and a right intention at the time of Communion, *and nothing more.*

2. Since the Decree has declared that venial sin, even though habitual, puts no hindrance to Communion, there is no longer any scandal for the faithful, who have had the Decree explained to them, in seeing imperfect souls approaching the Holy Table. If scandal should arise it is our business to remove it by throwing a little daylight into people's minds.

3. The two most serious objections to the above system now remain to be dealt with:

a. Those children who are less firmly established in virtue assuredly need their Communion in order to keep in the state of grace. In comparison with this imperative need, what do venial sins matter?

b. How can we reasonably expect them to correct these faults, even the smallest of them, if we defraud them of the most powerful means for correction—daily Communion? Do we not hear the Decree telling us: “it is impossible that they should not *gradually* emancipate themselves even from venial sin and from all affection thereto.”

But the result is so long coming! Let us be patient even with ourselves, just as our Lord is with us. Further let us have confidence in the assurance of Holy Church. All that we have to do is to maintain zeal for Holy Communion precisely as “an antidote for daily faults.” *

What else but an evident trace of Jansenistic mode of thought is this constant suggestion of a remedy that is often far worse than the evil itself—the suppression of communions? On the contrary our efforts ought rather to be directed towards arousing good will. Be the latter ever so small the grace of Communion will surpass all other means in efficacy. The chaplain him-

* Council of Trent.

self owns how easy it is to develop such dispositions in the young. "Nevertheless" he says, "this apostolate among children has been much simplified for us now that Holy Communion holds a place of honour; we need to use the curb rather than the spur."

C. *"Not for the more matter-of-fact characters."*

"As for you, my friend, who have a practical character, you will turn out a business man; you do not need to devote yourself so intensely to religious practices. You would not keep it up afterwards. Go to Communion once a week, but keep faithfully to that."

Sad to say, advice like this was once given to a certain youth who was making a Retreat for the express purpose of reforming his life and overcoming grave sins into which he constantly relapsed. It must be noticed that there was absolutely nothing in his circumstances to prevent his communicating every day: and, as experience showed, weekly Communion did not suffice for maintaining him in the state of grace. Nothing could better illustrate the extent to which well-meaning people are still imbued with irrational prejudices even now, after the Decree.

The determining factor in the guidance

of a sinner possessed of good will is neither his inclination, nor his character, still less the nature of his profession in life; but only *his soul's need*. There should be no question of humouring his sluggishness by abating our demands. We must try to rouse him and obtain from him the decision that he *ought* to make. The physician's skill is shown not only in the choice of remedies and diet, but also in inducing his patient to submit to these. Then how deplorable is this confusion between Communion—the food of the soul—and supererogatory acts of devotion. It would have been tolerable had the young man been told, “Don't overload yourself with Scapulars, don't give your name to every Confraternity.” But is the state of grace, forsooth, to be treated as a free matter, suitable to certain classes of Christians, or, at least, as an *occasional* need?

Further, such timid counsels, born of unenlightened faith, never succeed in the end. The young person who adopts a measure of Communion that fails to ward off mortal sin, will never become truly Christian. He will cling but fitfully to a practice for which he has never acquired a relish, and which naturally appears to be of doubtful efficacy.

II. THE DREAD OF SACRILEGIOUS COMMUNIONS.

No devout priest can fail to be filled with sadness and horror at the thought of profanations of the Most Holy Sacrament and the peril of a young soul that enters upon such a path. Nevertheless, this thought must not be allowed to dampen our zeal as promoters. An intelligent application of Pope Pius' Decree affords no ground for fearing any extension of this terrible evil. Père Lantelo expresses his convictions hereupon substantially as follows:

1. Dread of one evil is no excuse for incurring a worse. On what principle of government does the evil use which—it is assumed—a child here [and there will make of Daily Communion, justify our excluding the generality of children from what would prove the greatest possible benefit to them? One might as well abolish, or reduce the ordinary number of meals for fear lest some one should get indigestion. In order to prevent a supposed evil, we are to be content to allow a considerable number of the young to live habitually in mortal sin, though denying them opportunities for a freer use of the "Divine Remedy."

Let us not imitate that type of person so

oppressed by the need to act prudently that he never acts at all. False steps can certainly be avoided by never putting one foot before the other, but then, no progress is made.

Perhaps it will be lawful to recall an illustration of this penny-wise cautiousness given in an Appendix to another publication.* A priest undergoing visitation from his diocesan sought to extenuate certain defects in his management as follows: "At all events, my Lord, I can say this much. There has not been a single sacrilege committed in this parish for the last nine months." "And how do you know that?" asked the Bishop. "Because during that period no one has approached the Sacraments."

2. But to come to something more decisive. The most active apostles of daily Communion—writes Père Lintelo—assure us with one voice that sacrileges are more numerous in those places where Communion is less frequent. There is no reason to question this testimony coming from men who have had exceptional experience in the matter.† This is only what one might

* "Eucharistic Triduum" (Lintelo) annotated by the present writer. Page 215.

† Frasinetti (Prior of Santa Sabina), Cros, Lambert all

expect. The fewer the Communion days, the more a child would fear being noticed for staying away from Communion and becoming the subject of remarks from his companions and masters. On the other side, in proportion as Communions are more plentiful the danger of mortal sin, and *consequently* of unworthy receptions is diminished. If the abundant stores of grace heaped up count for anything, those who approach the Eucharist very frequently are less likely than others to fall into so grave a sin as sacrilege. "Experience proves" Père Lambert writes, "that a young man who might not shrink from a sacrilegious Communion, once a month, will shrink from a daily sacrilege." *

3. Do what one may, one can never be certain that there is no Judas among communicants. But, as pointed out elsewhere,† foreknowledge of this sad fact did not hin-

agree on this point. The first-named says "Spiritual Directors assure us that frequent communicants, and especially daily ones, keep free from mortal sin. If there are some exceptions proving the rule—they are souls who approach the Holy Table out of hypocrisy or self-interest."

* *Le Prêtre Educateur*, for Dec. ,1908, p. 322.

† "The Eucharistic Triduum," Appendix, p. 217. Other observations on the dread of sacrilege will be found in the same Appendix.

der our Lord from instituting the Eucharist. Neither should it hinder us from distributing it with a free hand. The only safeguard we can put is to give to each child such thorough instruction and full liberty in the matter that it may never feel itself morally forced to go to Communion.

No one will care to deny that the constant approach to Communion on the part of a large number of persons, especially if they live together, may lead certain weak characters to receive it without the necessary dispositions. But this rock has not escaped the vigilance of those engaged in promoting daily Communion. Long before the Decree appeared they had made their protest heard against the custom of holding "General Communions," and in behalf of measures for safeguarding individual liberty. The whole tendency of their action has been simply to persuade, counsel, encourage, and to surround the communicant with more ample opportunities and helps.

As a matter of fact, this freedom of soul has been greatly widened by the faithful application of the Decree of Pius X. Formerly the very fact that Communion was appointed for fixed days gave it the appearance of a disciplinary enactment. Under

such a system, a child's natural fear of becoming a subject of remark, combined with the indiscreet zeal of some teacher or other, might easily drive those who were unfit to the Communion rails. On the other side, the less restricted Communion is, the more it assumes the character of a free and spontaneous act prompted only by the conscience and the confessor.

It would never, surely, enter into any one's head to compel a child to communicate every day. In educational establishments, as any one the least acquainted with them knows, there will always be absences owing to a fit of sickness, to unfounded scruples, to the child having eaten sweets or taken a drink of water; to laziness, and to other trivial causes of the kind.

These accidental hindrances to Daily Communion in its literal sense should be taken note of, and represented to children in order to allay their fears—if such should arise—lest they should be suspected of grievous sin merely because they happen to miss a Communion now and again. In practice, it may well be doubted whether such a notion would enter the minds of their companions.

4. But if in spite of all our care some unhappy child should be driven through weak-

ness to abuse one of God's most excellent gifts, by what right could this crime be laid at the door of the apostle of Communion? Is it the fault of the servant at the feast that some guest or other appears without a wedding garment?

Would anything be gained by discouraging this frequency of Communion? That would be a grievous error. Rather we should ask ourselves: By what means—without falling into *other* abuses—can this Frequency be safeguarded? We should search for the causes of the mischief and consider whether there is sufficient freedom in the choice of confessors, in what way the practice is explained, or whether there is some defect in preparing and instructing for Confession. In a word—in- stead of diminishing Communions or hampering those who preach it prudently, the remedy must be sought in a *due formation of the child's conscience and character*.

Now to sum up the ways of dealing with dread of sacrilege.

1. If this dread takes the form of decrying the apostolate of daily Communion and withholding facilities for its practice by the young, then we have an inconsistency that will cause *grave* and *certain* injury to many young souls.

2. Such fears are now more unsubstantial than ever, after the Papal Decree, since a *thorough* execution of the same guarantees a wider liberty to souls while, at the same time, it removes the likelihood of sin much further from them.

3. Promoters of daily Communion have all along been fully alive to this possible rock ahead, and have for a long time past suggested the proper safeguard—care in forming consciences and protecting their freedom.

4. Should any abuse occur, let us try to eliminate its cause. But our conclusion should never be to cease speaking about daily Communion, nor to throw hindrances in its way. We must rather take care to present it in correct form.

To end with a passage from Père Lintelo's *La Sainte Eucharistie*: "This bent of mind, causing people to see in the increase of Communions nothing but an additional occasion for sacrilege—is it not like noticing in the sun nothing except its sun-spots, and denying its brightness? Tell me, pray, you who would put back this beneficent stream, bearing the world once more to the living springs of the Saviour—tell me upon your conscience: Is no consideration due to those hundreds of children, whom you

would rob of their Communions out of fear lest one or other of them should abuse the privilege? Ah! who shall deliver us at last from this hideous night-mare of Jansenism!"

III. PARENTAL OPPOSITION.

Will not the children's parents accuse us of intemperate zeal? Will they not object to their offspring receiving Communion so often? May they not, on this account, withdraw them from the school?

Such are the anxious queries which Père Lintelo puts into the mouths of authorities in educational establishments. In reply to the first of these alarms, he quotes the words of a Superior, as summing up the many reports that have come in from other similar quarters. "No serious difficulties have been met with from parents in the houses where very frequent Communion has been introduced. True, some parents *who had never heard the Decree mentioned in their parish*, signified their astonishment. But when the thing had been explained to them, and particularly if they perceived improvement in their children in consequence, they were quite satisfied to leave full liberty to the Superior, or to the child's Confessor. It seems desirable to restrain our zeal a little, in the case of particular children, for the

sake of avoiding friction with parents. Still prudence must not allow us to forget the express ruling of the Decree. "Frequent and daily Communion is to be specially promoted in establishments for the training of youth."

Parents may oppose Frequent Communion either as a matter of principle, or else on account of domestic arrangements needed for its practice and which would entail some little inconvenience to themselves. The question, therefore, is one of *principle*, or one of *domestic management*. As to the principle, it is our duty to enlighten them. When, however, a right understanding of the Decree has penetrated the Catholic home more thoroughly—in consequence of more universal preaching of the same—surprise will lessen. Meanwhile, two answers come readily to hand for giving to parents: It is the will of the Pope, and, your child is better for it. We must tell parents that it is our simple duty to instruct children in frequent and daily Communion, to lead them on to the practice and make the latter easy to them; that, of course, we should hold it wrong to do violence to their wills, since we only regard as really good Communions those which have become the spontaneous act of the children.

When the difficulty comes from *domestic causes*, we might often find in the child itself a valuable ally for pleading the interests of Communion with its parents. Here is a delightful instance. A boy of thirteen, feeling drawn by grace towards our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, conceived a strong desire for daily Communion. But, as happens in a good many families, this little man was a trifle spoilt and "coddled," and was left to sleep on in the morning as he would. A bright idea occurred to him. If he only had an alarum he could manage without being called. "Mother" he said one day "which ought one to value most? A Communion or three-and-a-half-francs?" In a surprised tone the mother replied, "Why, child, of course a Communion! It would be almost wicked to doubt it." "I am so glad of that. Now mother don't say "no," but buy me one of those alarums that cost that amount, and then I can begin from to-morrow to receive Communion daily." A good kiss was the mother's reply.

Some parents, however, may ask us where this is going to end. "If my child receives daily, I am afraid he will be wanting to become a priest or a religious!"

Where is it going to end? Our goal is no other than that of Our Lord and His Church

—to turn out earnest and thorough Christians possessing the divine life and overflowing with it.

That is a fair answer, and yet the objection hardly rings true, in times when the appreciation of Catholics for vocations to a higher life is so slender, and ideas about daily Communion are still so false. Just because people miss the truth that daily Communion is recommended to those who live in the world, no less than to those dwelling in the cloister—just because it is looked upon as a reward instead of as the ordinary support of every soul's life, parents come to associate the notion of a religious vocation with that of daily Communion. These prejudices will gradually yield to preaching conducted on lines in better harmony with the principles contained in the Decree. But what a good opportunity such an objection affords for reminding parents that their first duty is to help their children to live in the state of grace, that no doubt vocations do often come by preference to purer souls, in which God can work without let or hindrance, and that if the divine choice were to fall upon a child of theirs, this would be for that child a most precious gift and the greatest possible blessing for its family.

Is it possible that some heads of educational houses withhold encouragement to daily Communion, for fear lest they should lose some of their pupils? We do not like to attribute to them such timid and unsupernatural views.

The majority of parents who entrust their offspring to our Catholic institutions, rather than to others, have faith enough to respect our spiritual treatment, even if they do not positively approve of the same—that is to say, once they understand the motives which inspire us. As for the few, need we take them into account? Would it not be better, if need be, to lose a few subjects, whose presence moreover, may tend to neutralise the effect of our eucharistic propaganda? Besides, we should be conferring a very doubtful benefit upon these few by sacrificing, for their sake, the vital interests of so many young souls dear to Our Lord.

Does not experience prove that children who constantly receive Communion are more pious, manageable, industrious and modest in their talk and conduct?

Here is the testimony of a Superioress. “When X first came to us, she had a most ungovernable temper. Since she has taken to daily Communion she gives us absolutely

no trouble." "When N formerly came home for the vacation he used to exhibit a most disagreeable temper. Now he is quite nice." Then the informant added—though possibly without perceiving the connection—"He goes daily to Holy Communion."

It would be easy to multiply such examples indefinitely.

Where the number of very frequent communicants is large in a house, the general standard and tone is higher. It is this that attracts the better-minded class of parent. But better than all, the angels of God will, if necessary, see to the filling of establishments where God is so well served.

PARENTS AND THE "QUAM SINGULARI."

So far, in the above matter, the lines of the "Directoire" have been closely followed. Some additional paragraphs on the parental question may now be added, more particularly after the appearance of the later Decree "Quam Singulari," dealing with the Age for First Communion, and regulating the eucharistic training of little children after they have received the Holy Eucharist for the first time.*

* A more extended treatment of parental difficulties concerning the daily Communion of small children will

The Decree on First Communion no longer leaves the burden of promoting very frequent and even daily Communion among children mainly on the shoulders of professional Catholic educators and confessors. All those who have care of these young souls are equally charged with that duty. Thus we read (Article VI): "Those in charge of children must take the utmost care that, after their First Communion these same children should approach the Holy Table very frequently and—if it be possible—even daily as Jesus Christ and holy mother church desire it, and that they do so with such devotion as their age allows."

This injunction upon parents and other responsible persons comes from our Supreme Guide on earth in all moral or spiritual matters. The Holy See, is of course treating the question of frequent and daily Communion exclusively from the moral and spiritual standpoint. It does not profess to deal with the variety of material obstacles that may genuinely spring from a child's physical condition, or other non-spiritual causes. As to the latter, the Holy

be found in "Spoiling the Divine Feast"—a booklet by the present writer to be had at Messrs. Washbourne & Co. Price 1d.

Father can but trust to the loyalty and spirit of faith in Catholic parents, and to their esteem for the superior interests of a child's immortal and very dependent *soul*. These dispositions will save parents from yielding to the materialistic and sensual temper of the times, which sacrifices the eternal advantage of the soul to bodily culture and offers untold incense upon the altar of the goddess Hygeia. Is it under inspiration from this same well-groomed and "fully rested" divinity that some guardians of the young cheerfully allow their charges much over-excitement, fatigue, and late or early hours, when there is a question of allaying the greatly sharpened appetite of our modern juvenile for pleasure or amusement?

Let us, then, turn from the physical aspect to the moral, or spiritual one. It must be clear to any earnest and intelligent Catholic parent that such *moral* or *spiritual* objections as may occur can, in truth, have no solid foundation. For our divinely appointed guide in moral and spiritual problems *has decided the question for us*. In spite of this, some otherwise exemplary parents, and others, discover a host of such reasons why their particular child, should be exempted from the eucharistic régime set forth so

clearly in Article VI of the Decree "Quam Singulari."

How is this? (There is, of course, to be found that paragon of superior spiritual insight who was unaccountably overlooked by the College of Cardinals at the last papal election; but we can pass him by.) Do those in charge imagine the Pope to have left compliance with his plain injunction to their own discretion or fancy? The Decree in question reveals no trace of any such concession. Then, does the Holy See utterly ignore differences in child-character? No—for it refers to them, not only in the closing words of the Article above quoted, but in other Articles too. But the Pope does ignore them *in so far as* they might be urged as reasons for reducing the *frequency of Communions*, intended and expressed in Article VI. The effect of the above qualifying phrases is rather to moderate possible exactions which might be practised upon the little ones on the strength of their frequent Communions, and to curb over sanguine expectations whether as to the extent or the speediness of tangible fruit. In other words, those in charge stand forewarned against demanding or expecting too much from these small communicants; but they are not authorized to limit at will the

number of Communions on account of shortcomings or peculiarities of character that may be observable in them.

Thus giddiness, changeableness of disposition, lack of fixed attention during preparation and thanksgiving (such as, perhaps, even their elders cannot command) afford no justification for defrauding the little ones of the Heavenly Bread. It is the *right* of every soul in the state of grace, and these children receive it, in their simple, and *perhaps* imperfect way, in order that Jesus may help them "to be good," or better still, moved by an innocent love of Him. If defects and shortcomings justify a parent, or other guide of childhood, in deciding off-hand that once a month, or once a week, "is quite enough," what becomes of the earlier Decree, in which we are taught that the Eucharist is the "divine remedy" for our failings? This being so, it is plain that faults are reasons *for* and not *against* the use of this Remedy, and that the more numerous and persistent the faults are, the more numerous and urgent are the reasons for taking It. The absence of visible improvement forms no reasonable ground for limiting the child. We do not usually lessen the dose according as the ailment proves more obstinate. In the case of

the body this would not be common sense—a faculty by no means to be despised in spiritual affairs, either.

It is alleged perhaps that Willie does not want to go to the altar oftener. No, possibly not. But does he want to learn his lessons either? If he shirks them, do we at once surrender the point?

It is more profitable to enquire: Why is it, and how is it, that he lacks a desire to receive our Blessed Lord more frequently? Human nature desires good that it appreciates. If the boy or girl does not value Communion much, it is probably because those responsible have failed to take the means for creating an appreciation of It in the child's mind. No considerations adapted to its intelligence are presented to the child such as would excite esteem, and hence desire, for Communion. Willie may not wish for more, he may cheerfully acquiesce in the fanciful limitation of his spiritual nourishment. But this is simply because he has never been helped to realise how very much he is losing.

The above observations may possibly be of service to educational authorities or spiritual guides, for meeting the objections of less enlightened parents.

IV. "WE MUST NOT VIOLATE THE LIBERTY OF CHILDREN."

This apparently sage dictum may easily hide a most dangerous snare of Jansenism. Like every other suggestion proceeding from the enemy of souls, its plausibility lies in the mixture of truth with falsehood. The confusion of thought which it contains is apt to catch the unwary in a trap.

It may be remarked, to start with, that quite as much constraint may be exercised for hindering frequent and daily Communion as for imposing it upon the young. And whatever be the case now, it may safely be said that a vast deal more pressure was used to keep down Communions than to increase them. Quite as much spiritual mischief too, is done to young souls by reducing them all to one low level of nutrition, insufficient for the essential needs of many, as by forcing plentiful soul-food on the unwilling and ill-prepared.

But is it thinkable that the most zealous apostles of frequent and daily Communion, such as Ségur, Cottolengo, Dom Bosco and others would have consented to tyrannise over consciences? Would they have adopted any other method except persuasion? Used they to show displeasure to those who kept

aloof from the Holy Table in spite of their recommendations? Did they bring any disciplinary penalties to bear upon the less fervent?

A sentence of St. Augustine, throws light upon their real methods. In his 26th homily on the Gospel of St. John, he comments thus upon the words of Our Lord, "No man can come to the Father except the Father draw him," "It is by a movement of the heart and not by a bodily movement that we approach God. He who lacks the will does not readily approach. If he come unwillingly neither does he believe; if he believe not, neither does he come. To understand that Jesus Christ is God, this is being drawn by the Father. This revelation is itself the attraction. If you hold out a green branch to a sheep, you attract it; if nuts to a child, you attract it. So, too, truth, wisdom, and justice draw our souls, which were made for them. This revelation is itself the attraction."

In the same way, by making children understand the appeal of Jesus Who claims their Love, Who offers healing for their wounds, we attract them to Communion. And if there are many in a house who respond to this appeal, either because they are more favourably disposed, or because

the priest's words are more richly blessed, an eager movement towards the Holy Table will be aroused. And God be thanked for it! Yet our anxiety for this result should not prevent measures being taken for ensuring to children the benefit of a real freedom.*

“COMPEL THEM TO COME IN.”

(ST. LUKE XIV 23.)†

At this point, Père Lintelo briefly recapitulates the policy more fully traced by Père Cros, an admitted expert in promotion of the Papal Decrees among the young. As the work referred to, “*Enfants à la Sainte Table*” may not be within reach of my readers, it will be best to elaborate a little the summary of Père Cros, as given, with page references to the said work, by Père Lintelo.

1. The watchword given us by Rome is the “*Compelle intrare*” of the Gospel. The author referred to explains how this is to be understood. These words, “*Compel them to come in*” are not ours, they are those of Jesus Christ. Our “*compulsion*” does not consist in dragging children

* See above P. (Obstacles to be removed).

† Words occurring in the Gospel upon which priests are to preach on the Sunday within the octave of Corpus Christi, by desire of the Pope. (Letter to Episcopate.) April 10, 1907, No. 2.

to the rails by main force, but in gently persuading them, encouraging them with a word, a sign, a smile, or a look".* The same author tells an anecdote, illustrating the truth that "Liberty" does not always consist in leaving people to their own initiative. A French Bishop—still living in 1907—said one day to a General, "Why is it, General, that the other officers do not go to Mass as you do; are they not free to attend?"—"My Lord, even I have to overcome myself in order to do it. They tell us, You are free to attend Mass. But that's a sham. Every one knows that our soldiers will be really "free" to go to Mass only when they shall be marched to it, as they are to drill; we shall be "free" as soon as they *make us* go—not before." Yet the General spoke of grown-up men, not of children at school.

2. It is useless to count upon the initiative of children. The Devil and human respect constantly sap their vigour. "When the time comes for Confession or Communion, Satan does his best to cast a spell of torpor and laziness over his young world, and those in authority—unconsciously playing into his hands—do nothing and say nothing to

* Cros, *Enfants à la Sainte Table*, p. 100 (First Series)
De Wit, 35 Rue Royale, Bruxelles.

break it—with the possible result that the child falls the next day into some sin, or sinks into it more deeply. A little word or kindly enquiring look is all that is needed for that child to pull itself together, and get up and go. I have heard priests saying: “In such matters we must respect the liberty of children.” As if it were “liberty” for them to be left for a week or more in the power, the bitterest enemy to all liberty—the Devil. . . .” Again “The child has far less initiative for the preservation and strengthening of its spiritual life than it has for his bodily one. For several years it has but little part in the business of sustaining and protecting its animal existence; its part is more or less a passive one. The same law obtains when a little later the child’s spiritual life shows signs of activity. Its spiritual parents have to do almost everything and provide everything for it; the child itself can only yield and receive.”

The Catholic Church, filled with the spirit of God, rules that the child shall not merely be baptised, but confirmed betimes; she rules that it shall seek absolution for sin, and Holy Communion as soon as reason dawns. It is moreover, to be brought again and again to the Holy Eucharist—the ordinary and frequent nourishment for

all Christians.* The Church, in other words, expects next to nothing from the child itself; all must come from her own motherly care and the efficacy of her Sacraments." †

3. It is only by means of our exhortations and repeated encouragement that the *true* liberty of the young is brought into play. We should not go to the lengths suggested by the French General, just quoted, and march the children to the Communion rails, as soldiers are paraded to Mass. For here we are dealing with a religious act demanding the state of grace. Still, it is by constantly instructing and exhorting and encouraging the young *en masse* that we free them from the fetters that chiefly hold them fast—fear of singularity, false shame, consciousness of many faults, and the like.

4. May not we priests, and others responsible for children, have reason to fear lest one day the young should stand in witness against us at the tribunal of God for having failed to give them that friendly impulse which would have brought them in contact with the fountain of spiritual

* Letter of Pius IX. to the Bishops of France, March 12, 1855. Article VI of the Decree "*Quam Singulari*," of Pius X.

† Cros, *ibid*, pp. 106-7.

life? We could not well plead ignorance with the explicit instructions of the Holy See before our eyes, and it would be equally vain to allege an error of judgment if we have deliberately preferred our own private spiritual theories to the judgment of Christ's Vicar. We may have to be reminded in Purgatory, the same author observes, that we had no right to *attribute* this Divine Gift of the Eucharist to ourselves, as our peculiar possession, but that we were made priests in order that we might *distribute* It freely to others. "Ut sumant et dent ceteris." Such—S. Thomas affirms us—is the meaning of our title of "Sacerdos," i.e., *Sacra dans populo* (the giver of sacred things to the people). What reason can we allege for communicating ourselves daily and refusing daily Communion to others? That which is so useful and even necessary to our own souls, why should it be hurtful to the faithful whose life is far more exposed to evil influences, and to our shame, be it said, often more prayerful and exemplary. "I should not like such great indulgence to be shown to priests while we are fain to be so severe in the matter with laymen." *

5. Advocates of this wrongly conceived

* Prior Frassinetti, "The Banquet of Divine Love," p. 115.

"liberty of children," besides being in reality partisans of inaction, fall into very curious inconsistencies.

Here it may perhaps be allowed to repeat a few sentences from another work. There is a good deal of foolish talk about "respecting the liberty of children." An able and exemplary Bishop* has aptly defined liberty as "the full opportunity for doing what one ought to *desire*." Notoriously children constantly desire what they ought not. A holy disregard for the "free" but obviously ignorant and untutored tendencies of the child is of the very essence of all real education. Our champion of child-liberty seems chiefly anxious about its protection when spiritual nourishment and culture of the child are in question. As for its physical and mental culture no theories prevent his disregarding the choices of the child as to what, and how much, and how frequently, it shall eat and drink, what medicines it shall take, how it shall be clothed, in what weather it shall go out, or what lessons it shall learn. The religious conscience of the child requires training also.

Cardinal Gennari—a foremost writer on the Eucharistic Decrees—when explaining

* Bishop of Madrid, Alcalà.

the obligations arising out of the Decree "Quam Singulari"—says that disregard, on the part of those in charge, of the injunction contained in Article VI of that Decree "would be *sinful*." But to prevent a violent interpretation of his words, he adds in a note. "It is clear that, as children are not bound under sin to communicate daily, parents have neither a right nor a duty to compel them thereto, nor to exert overwhelming moral pressure. They are however, bound to invite, encourage, and help them to the practice—to lead them by the hand, so to say, gently and efficaciously—just as they do in other matters seriously concerning their spiritual or bodily welfare." Here we have the golden mean between leaving Communion entirely to the initiative of children, under pretext of liberty—a plan we should not think of adopting with regard to their *temporal* requirements—and the other vicious extreme of dragooning them into very frequent or daily Communion, forcibly overcoming their reluctance. To procure this desirable mean, three things are required 1. A proper presentment of daily Communion as the desire of Jesus Christ and a need of their own souls. 2. This will beget *conviction* and hence willing Communion

making the way easy for them by suitable domestic or school arrangement, so as to remove all external hindrances to their feeble wills. 3. Encouraging them when they show signs of relaxing, but without showing any disfavour when they miss, and still less upbraiding them for their faults on the ground of their frequent or daily use of so powerful a means for self-correction. It is idle to wait for a child to make the first move. Children may have initiative for games and "treats," but they have next to none in more serious affairs, whether in the sphere of study, hygiene, or that of religious practices. They need to be "led by the hand," that is, induced "gently and efficaciously" to do that which is for their real advantage.

We must not—concludes Père Lintelo—dignify inadequate measures with the name of prudence. Our lack of activity would prove ruinous to souls. Let us not enable the Devil to boast that he has employed those who should press souls to the Heavenly Banquet for the purpose of keeping them from It. Such a course may expose us to the terrible reproach of the Divine Judge: "Non pavisti, ergo occidisti." "You failed to feed, therefore you slew."

V. "WE SHALL GET TO IT BY GRADUAL STAGES."

Another blend of truth and error. Of course, if we are speaking of the whole Catholic world, it is only too plain that it will take, ten, twenty years, or more, to complete a reform of such gravity, and one so opposed to notions hitherto prevailing. Indeed, one might allow half a century for the transformation except that in our age we have at our disposal means of propagation unparalleled in history by which the eucharistic idea may be propagated.

But our prospect of the length of time needed for restoring the primitive practice of daily Communion, far from cooling our zeal, ought rather to quicken it. For, after all, success will not come automatically, by the advance of the calendar, but through vigorous and unremitting effort on our part.

"We shall get to it by gradual stages." This proposition may mean one of two things, (*a*) that, in dealing with children, it is best at first only to aim at a certain increase in the number of Communions, and then—later on—to broach the subject of daily Communion—instead of presenting daily Communion from the start, as the

mark to be aimed at, or (b) that instead of publicly preaching full daily Communion, confessors should choose out the more pious among their young penitents and indoctrinate them privately in the full practice. Whichever be meant, there appears to be no solid reason *for*, and a great deal to be said *against*, either plan.

We are, of course, speaking here of children or young people who are still under the process of religious formation. No doubt, in the case of Christians in middle life living in the world, who would have to break with long established habits, it is evident that we shall often have patiently to be content with far less than daily, or even really frequent Communion. Our plan must be to persuade them to add somewhat to the number of their Communions and thank God that they have entered on the path of more frequent approach to the Holy Table.

All the same, by means of a little zeal and tact—for the divine aid will never fail us in such a task—more satisfactory results will often be obtained in certain cases than could have been expected. Are there not everywhere to be met with certain souls quite open to the inspiration of grace—whatever be their age—and only needing the

impetus of a priestly word to take the step forward? Examples of the kind are not wanting among all classes of men; they may be met with in every well-cared-for parish.

But when children are in question, free from preconceived actions and with leisure at their disposal, who only need to understand better the desire of Jesus Christ and of His Church, why should daily Communion in its fulness be delayed? This would be to institute stages that are neither required nor desired by the Church, and to replace the teaching of the Decree by our personal theories of progression. Besides we should meanwhile be defrauding souls of the many precious graces obtainable by more frequent Communion.*

“For my part” writes Père Lintelo “I have never been able to understand how any priest can—except for grave reasons—deprive a soul, were it but once, of this all-powerful aid, and encourage him in the privation.”

It will, perhaps, be urged that this occasional abstinence from the Bread of Life is designed to excite a stronger desire to

* “Confessors, however are to be careful not to dissuade any one (*ne quemquam avertant*) from frequent and daily Communion, provided that he is in a state of grace and approaches with a right intention.” (Art. 5.).

increase reverence. That was the Jansenist view; but the Decree shows us that this is not the standpoint from which the value of Communion is to be estimated.

With a view to increasing the number of Communions the device is sometimes adopted of proposing as motives for approach the occurrence of some feast, or anniversary, or the obtaining of some favour, success in an undertaking, etc. The end in view—namely an increased use of Communion is of course, praiseworthy. But, in addition to drawbacks already mentioned, this artifice has the great defect of perverting the *true notion* of Communion—which is that of the *ordinary normal* diet of a good Catholic and the wish of the Church, quite apart from special motives just mentioned.* We do not reserve our material bread for days of exceptional festivity, nor for special bodily needs. We eat it day after day, without waiting for Bank Holidays or occasions of national rejoicing. It is our every-day food for supporting life. So is the Eucharist—in the intention of Him Who gave it—the “daily bread” of the spiritual life.

It is apt to be forgotten that a child will

* Yet, as “half a loaf is better than no bread,” this imperfect device may be of use in cases where nothing better can be obtained.

become more attached to a practice once it plainly perceives its benefits. In this sense it has been well said, "As for 'the impression made,' if it had a voice in the chapter, it would certainly vote for us." i.e., in favour of *immediately* adopting full daily Communion.* Yet a false comparison might possibly be invoked on behalf of gradual advance towards the full practice. In the case of the body—some might say—one would not recommend to an invalid a sudden transition from a diet of "slops," to three square meals a day. The change is too violent, the digestive organs, after a long period of very light work, are unprepared for the sudden strain thus put upon them. But (for a wonder) the parallel drawn from bodily nourishment fails in the present case. The digestive organs—so to speak—of the soul are *always* prepared for daily Communion, if the person is in the state of grace and moved by a right intention. *No more is needed for daily Communion than for Communion once a year.*

One cannot insist too much that "impressions" are not the chief thing to be considered. Our deepest concern should be that souls are perishing for the want of the saving treatment of daily Communion.

* "La Communion Quotidienne," by Père Barbe, S.J.

Before all else, we must help them to keep themselves *alive*—that is to say, *constantly in the grace of God*—the only kind of spiritual life worthy of the name; and hence we should administer to them the Sovereign Remedy, measuring the dose according to the design of the Divine Physician, and not according to our own conceits.*

It is for this very reason—"that we may be freed from daily faults and preserved from mortal sins"—that the Church proposes daily Communion to us; and not as an ideal standard attainable only by a select few, but as a *normal* system for securing to us *continuous* and *robust* health of soul.

VI. "WE MUST LEAVE THE INITIATIVE TO THE CONFESSOR."

This is a curious saying, for the Decree distinctly appeals to the Preacher, also. It bids him—as well as "parish priests and confessors"—to exhort the faithful "often and with much zeal" to frequent and daily Communion. The cooperation of preachers is required by the Pope for the Eucharistic

* Cf. "the desire of Jesus Christ . . . that the faithful should daily approach the Sacred Banquet," etc. . . . (Decree, 3rd. paragraph.)

† Council of Trent, Sess. XIII, Chapter 2.

‡ Article 6 of Decree.

Triduum during the octave of Corpus Christi, and even his text—the Parable of the Great Supper is assigned to him. Again, the Holy See has heaped privileges upon the Priest Members of the Communion League—an association established in Rome for the sole object of forwarding the Decree on Daily Communion by prayer, writing and preaching. So the writer has something to do, as well as the preacher and confessor, in giving the initiative.

We shall often have occasion to notice the important part played by the *confessor*, in the work of propagating Communion. Still, it may be said that he can only deal with those who elect to come to him. Besides, he has to work under all the disadvantages attending the plan of isolated initiation in the confessional. So he must necessarily depend in great measure on the preacher and writer, both for the supply of material upon which to work, and for the removal of certain moral difficulties capable of neutralising the force of his exhortations.

Experience now to hand, after these six years that the Decree has been in force, enables us to test by facts the relative values of the two methods of promotion hitherto tried in educational establishments.

A word or two about each of them.

I. *Gradual Initiation*, i.e., starting with the more piously disposed, or elder, scholars, and carrying on the work chiefly in the confessional. The objections to this plan are that it falls short of the energetic impulse given in the Decree and of the "Instructions" delivered by authority to the Priests of the "Daily Communion League." Moreover, it bears traces of those half-hearted counsels, which are but relics of old and now authoritatively discarded notions about Communion.

Under the above method the task of confessors—however zealous they may be—is extremely arduous. They have to deal with minds utterly unprepared; they cannot possibly give each penitent a complete treatise on the subject; they have to contend with shyness and human respect. Thus the very souls which have the greatest need of the practice are not won over to it, and, as abundant experience proves, the results obtained are both fewer and less lasting.

II. *Creation of a general movement*, in the first instance by means of special public discourses—preferably, by an Eucharistic Triduum. This means has been twice indicated by the Holy See—in the "Instruc-

tions " to the Communion League, and in a Letter to the Bishops, April 10, 1907. The only way of instilling clear convictions such as will hold out against prevailing difficulties, is to give an orderly exposition of the reasons for going to Communion, of the economy of the spiritual life, and of its nourishment. There should follow a detailed refutation of current objections to the practice. Moreover, only a general agitation can give a sufficiently strong impulse for overcoming indecision and human respect. The child who has only been privately initiated—under the first-named system of promotion—leaves the confessional filled with nervous anticipation of the surprise, ridicule, or ill-natured taunts of companions. He may not realise that he will have with him companions, who will keep him in countenance at the time of Communion, that is to say, unless they, in turn, should wait for someone else to take the lead. On the other hand the "general movement" plan, if wisely conducted, at once creates a public opinion in favour of frequent and daily Communion. Wonderment will cease, chaff will be less effective, and taunts—such as "I suppose you're a regular saint now,"—will lose its point once the truth has been well rubbed into the school that

daily Communion is neither a "reward of virtue," nor a proof of it.

Wherever the "General Movement" has been tried, the results obtained have exceeded all expectations.

It is now—after the first general impetus has been publicly and thoroughly given—that the confessor comes in as an invaluable ally. Once the start has been made and fervour has been renewed *in time of Retreat* (an important point), the earnestness of the communicants will still need to be sustained by the constant personal watchfulness of the Confessor. Until he is fully assured as to the fidelity of his young penitent, to the practice, he should try to inform himself as to the state of affairs. He should praise efforts already made and the progress achieved, encourage him (or her) to persevere, and point out the disadvantage, or—it may be—the danger of missing Communion. But he must not be surprised if the child acts like one, and sometimes misses Communion for very trivial reasons, sometimes out of mere caprice. He will take pains in explaining the groundlessness of objections and how the Devil is tricking him. Such incessant care, doubtless, requires patience; but then a priest who is fond of young people will certainly be

able to command a sufficiency of that virtue.

It can hardly be doubted that had preachers and confessors set to work unanimously from the first, had instructions been everywhere given frequently and with much zeal, had an excessive conservatism not prevented the slight disciplinary changes needed for facilitating the salutary practice in educational houses, the Confessor's work would have been greatly simplified, and the fruit obtained amongst us would by this time have been far more abundant than it is.

VII. "PEOPLE HAVE LOST THEIR HEADS!
THEY WILL COME BACK TO THEIR
SENSES PRESENTLY!"

Before the actual appearance of the Decree "On Daily Communion," many clear-headed and earnest priests had already been guiding souls in the way of daily Communion. But it would be difficult to exaggerate the opposition they had to encounter or the obstacles thrown in their way. Then came the "Sacra Tridentina Synodus" as a very Charter of Liberty both for the souls in question and for their priestly guides. From that day forward they could continue a work so dear to them

without incurring suspicions of unorthodoxy and moreover, with a prospect of immediate results. From the morning after the Decree was published they were fully prepared to enter upon the holy campaign under the guidance of the Holy See. Are they, on these accounts, to be dubbed "hot-heads?"

Other priests—who had hesitated, but did not lack faith or piety—said at once: "Rome has spoken, and all controversy is at an end. It is no longer time for arguments, but for obedience.* So let us to the work!" And fresh light upon the subject came to reward their submission and loyalty. Is this "losing one's head?"

No doubt in the eyes of the sluggard and of that type of person whose prudence exhibits itself mainly in throwing cold water upon all initiative, both sets of priests will be regarded as "hot-heads" that is a thing to be borne with composure. The consolation of seeing souls preserved, or rescued from the slavery of sin is more than compensation enough for criticism of this kind. But there is still room for watchfulness in order to save souls from being de-

* Or, as the late Mgr. Dadolle told his clergy, with reference to the Decree on First Communion: "*Lorsque la voix suprême de l'Eglise se fait entendre, on ne discute pas, on exécute.*"

ceived by specious pleas of prudence into abating a fervour that has never overstepped the limits of obedience and discretion. The immense profit derived by souls from daily Communion is certainly calculated to fire a priest's enthusiasm. But must not the Heart of Our Lord itself be thrilled thereat? “I came to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I but that it be enkindled.” “I came that they might have life, and have it more abundantly.”* Surely a priest is to be pitied in whom such appeals find but a feeble response. The “hot-headedness” with which some are charged may, after all, be somewhat akin to the joy of the disciples, when—returning from their mission—they recounted the wonders they had wrought in their Master's name, though we must be careful to exclude the alloy of self-complacency which He detected and re-proved.

Have those who speak of intemperate zeal ever seriously studied the papal documents? The question is suggested by the lack of elementary acquaintance with them sometimes revealed by persons otherwise well posted in ecclesiastical lore. Do they realise the overwhelming authority at the back of promoters? Such passages as the

* St. Luke XIII, 49, St. John X, 10.

following, speak well for the sanity of earnest advocates of Daily Communion.

1. "His Holiness, being most earnestly desirous, that the faithful should be invited to partake of the Sacred Banquet as often as possible, and even daily" etc.*

‡ 2. "Frequent and daily Communion as a thing most earnestly desired by Our Lord, utpote a Christo Domino, optatissima," etc.†

3. "Parish priests, confessors and preachers, are frequently and with much zeal to exhort the faithful to this devout and salutary practice." ‡

4. Wherefore, the Sovereign Pontiff greatly rejoicing at the salutary fruits so far gathered" (i.e. from the Decree on Daily Communion") imposes on me the duty of exhorting your Lordship and all the Bishops of the Catholic world, to continue as you have begun, and to strive your utmost to procure that the faithful may receive the Holy Eucharist very frequently and even daily for it is through this Divine Banquet that their supernatural life, is continually nourished and developed." §

* Official Version of "Sacra Tridentina Synodus" (Burns & Oates), p. 9.

† *Ibid.*, Article I., p. 7.

‡ *Ibid.*, Article VI., p. 8.

§ Letter to the Catholic Episcopate, April 10, 1907.

5. "For from this source (i.e. the Eucharist) the spirit of the supernatural life flows to the whole Church.*

.6 Article VI of the "*Quam Singulari*"—see above.

7. "You are well aware that all things receive a new life from a pious and religious use of Communion. Hence it is a matter of primary importance that the practice of frequent and daily Communion should prevail among the faithful—and not among adults alone, but all those who have acquired the use of reason. Keep in view, as the first object of your consideration, the root and substance of the more recent Acts of the Holy See, viz., the "*Mirae Caritatis*" of our illustrious predecessor, and of our own decrees—the "*Sacra Tridentina Synodus*" and the "*Quam Singulari*," and see by what means they may be more fully and successfully carried into effect."†

8. "But we have no cause for despair. For, a new fire has burst forth among the faithful of fervent devotion towards the Most Holy Eucharist. Numberless men and women and not only they, but young

* Pius X. to Cardinal Aguirre, Primate of Spain, June 5, 1911.

† Papal Brief to Cardinal V. Vannutelli, Westminster Congress, 1908.

people and children—show constancy and fervour in frequently receiving the Holy Eucharist, drawing strength, therefrom for their faith and the practice of other christian virtues.*

Now with such a mass of uniform evidence staring us in the face—and more might easily be added †—it would seem that, instead of being alarmed at the high temperature of zeal manifested in advocates of the Eucharistic Decrees, it might be better for critics to “examine themselves and see” whether their own clinical thermometer does not register alarmingly below the normal indicated in Article VI of both the main Decrees. It is more attention to the “two Sixes” that we need. And as to “coming back to their senses,” it would appear that the Vicar of Christ has wisely provided against any such return. In England too, it is sometimes whispered: “Wait till the present Pope dies. You’ll see it will all be changed.” Will it? If the meaning here is that at some future period, when the “Pope of the Eucharist” is no longer with us to fan the flame, eucharistic practice may decline, of course that is

* Allocution to new Cardinals, Nov. 29, 1911.

† See “Eucharistic Triduum, pp. 33-37, where eight or nine further evidences are set out.

possible, just as it was a fact that, after the eighth or ninth century it actually did so. By the sixteenth century it had declined so terribly as to bring about the lamentable condition witnessed to by S. Ignatius in a letter to the villagers near his home. The best Catholics were for the most part what we now describe as "hardy annuals." Is this a state of things to be desired or looked forward to?

But unless the writer be greatly deceived, there is a deeper and less warrantable meaning in the said prophecy. May it not imply that earnest promoters of daily Communion are working on principles which will later be officially shelved by the Church as mistakes? Any one who should think this must have forgotten how deeply the roots of daily Communion are embedded in the history of the Catholic Church and in universally recognised principles of theology.

At all events, the Holy Father has taken the best possible measures for preventing a relapse into unsound theories regarding the use of the Holy Eucharist. And as these are but the aftermath of Jansenism, there appears no reason why—after their elimination—the said repulsive form of error should ever seriously trouble consciences

again. Pius X. has cut short all controversy and fixed the true doctrine. He has so cleared up the communicant's path that "not even the fool may err therein." Henceforward, in every school of Catholic Theology, in all approved theological textbooks placed in the hands of church student, the teachings of the Decree will replace those arbitrary rules for "frequent Communion," so opposed to ancient tradition and even at variance with theological principles appearing between the same covers. The Eucharistic crusade proclaimed by Pius X. is being preached by numbers of priests, throughout the world, including the 40,000 members of the "Priests' Communion League," the principles of the Decree are being popularised in publications of all sorts and in every tongue, and their number is being yearly multiplied. Then, there are the annual Eucharistic Triduums, and last, but certainly not least, habits of frequent and daily Communion are fast spreading among the young—the hope of the future Catholic Church. Thus many things are conspiring against the peace of our prophets of decline, or rather, are powerfully contributing towards the wider spread of this soul-preserving, soul-healing movement.

ALLEGED CHECK FROM THE POPE.

But Pius X.—so runs a murmur—is said to have censured certain excesses of zeal, in the present matter, that were reported to him privately.

It is obviously difficult to meet this appeal to the unknown coming 'mostly from persons only too far removed from danger of a like reproof. But this much may safely be said. It is surely absolutely futile to attempt an investigation of reports, vaguely rumoured to have been made to the Pope, unless we are informed as to their exact nature, and as to the terms of the answers given by the Holy Father. The only reasonable—or, indeed, possible course for us is *to cling tightly and confidently to the public and official text of Decrees*. Others may perhaps know—or imagine they know—what the Pope *thinks*. We, however, must clearly be guided in practice by what the Pope plainly, publicly, and repeatedly *says*, until some different interpretation shall issue with equal publicity from the same authority that delivered the Decree. In the meantime the texts call for our serious and *practical* attention. Presumably, they were intended for this purpose: and so long as we steer our bark

“*Promotion*” faithfully by this chart, we need fear no shoals.

That it is possible to be indiscreet in methods of furthering the Decree needs no saying. If indiscretion occurred, it would usually be with regard to the freedom of the children’s consciences—not providing due facilities for Confession, or dragooning them into daily Communion. If such things have been—here or there—they would form as poor an excuse for abating previous zeal as for continuing to view the Decree with suspicion, and doing little or nothing.

The decision of the Holy See has been in force some six years. Is it not time for some of us to cease regarding daily Communion as if it were some highly explosive bomb-shell, deposited on our spiritual path by an anarchist Pontiff, and needing to be handled and neutralised with infinite precaution!

If we turn from Decrees to Pontifical acts of a lower category, we cannot fail to be struck by the profuseness with which marks of encouragement have been accorded to promoters of the Decree. These furnish us with a fresh reason for paying small heed to adverse criticism.*

* The following list of tokens of papal approval is probably incomplete; Letter of Cardinal Gennari to Pere Jules Lintelo, S.J., conveying the Pope’s commendations

VIII. "IT IS NOT REALLY THE POPE'S DOING: SOMEONE HAS PUT HIM UP TO IT"!

Such, in substance, is a very curious and pointless attempt to weaken the force of the Papal Decree on Daily Communion. It has been necessary—be it said with regret—to present it in a somewhat "bowdlerised" form. It plainly suggests that, had the Holy Father been left to his own judgment, all this eagerness for Daily Communion would never have been.*

Hereupon it may be observed—

(a) From what we know of the apostolic zeal of our venerated Pontiff, of his extraordinary power of initiative, and of the motto "Instaurare omnia in Christo"—which he,

of Jan. 25, 1907 and Aug. 5, 1909. Commendations to same, for conformity with the Pope's mind, by Cardinal V. Vannutelli, at Metz Congress, 1907, communicated publicly to Priests' Section in His Eminence's name, by the Bishop of Verdun. Congratulations to the Italian translator of Pere Lintelo's Metz paper on "Duties of Confessors and Preachers according to the Decree." Letters of praise sent in the Pope's name to the following authors of Eucharistic works on the Decree: Canon Antoni M. l'abbé Degueuser, Rev. Father Devine, C.P., Rev. Father Barbe, S.J., Rev. J. B. Ferreres, S.J., and to the present writer ("Notes on Daily Communion," 1st edition).

* Again the movement is occasionally described as "a Jesuit move." There might be a worse; all the same this is "trop d'honneur," as the list of names cited in these pages fortunately shows.

spontaneously took upon his accession, any external stimulus, like the one above suggested, would appear quite unnecessary.*

After all, renewing "in Christ," and renewing "with" Him—by means of Communion—are things very closely connected. There is a very natural sequence between insistence on the importance of Christian Doctrine—one of Pius's first acts—and urging the abundant use of the Bread of Life. Both forms of *feeding* upon Our Lord—namely, by faith in His teaching, and by sacramental reception of His real Flesh and Blood are united in His discourse, given in the Sixth Chapter of S. John's Gospel. And real eating supplies us with the needful

* Some remarkable, and almost prophetic words occur in a letter of Mgr. de Ségur to Mlle. Tamisier—who seems to have originated the idea of *International Eucharistic Congresses* and lived to see their inception. "It seems to me that if I were Pope the chief aim of my Pontificate would be to introduce the practice of daily Communion. I have humbly imparted this thought to our dear Pius IX.; but perhaps the time for it is not yet. The Pope who shall do this *will be the Restorer of the world.*" (Aug. 20, 1880.) And again "The saint whom Jesus shall make use of to effect this return (to Apostolic custom) will be the greatest benefactor the Church has ever seen issuing from her bosom. Everything is contained in Communion, all fruits come from Communion—as from the source of life and strength and unlimited fecundity." ("Nos Grandeurs en Jesus," Part II.)

grace for carrying out in the face of temptation what Christian Doctrine teaches.

This holy banquet secures practical perseverance in the spiritual life. Or, in other words, it is Communion that feeds our faith and enables us to carry its lessons into practice, in spite of the allurements of our passions.

(b) If this movement towards daily Communion has been prompted by those near the Pope, these alleged "wirepullers" cannot be strictly credited with originality for their so-called "fad." The Early Church had the same—very badly—and the faithful, moreover, took an uncommonly long time—some nine centuries—to get rid of it. Leo XIII. himself, to judge from his too little noticed Encyclical on the Holy Eucharist,* which was almost his last will and testament to the Church, was plainly verging towards the practice of the primitive centuries. For the last quarter of a century, or more, Catholic theology has developed a marked tendency in the same direction.

So much—and perhaps more than enough—as to this supposed genesis of the Decree.

But now, granting facts to be as alleged—granting for a moment that daily Communion would never have occurred, or

* *Mirae Caritatis*, May 28, 1902.

commended itself, to the Pope except it had been pressed upon him by his surroundings, what of it? How could this alter the significance of another whole series of undeniable facts namely, that the Head of the Church has sanctioned the idea, made it his own;* repeatedly urged its practical realisation upon the faithful of all sorts and conditions—the young as well as the old—has bidden Bishops to strive their utmost (*omnem impendant operam*) to stimulate the movement, commanded priests to exhort the faithful to the practice “frequently and with much zeal.” † That all this is so at least a dozen acts of the Holy See testify beyond all cavil, hence it is surely irrelevant conjecture what may have been the circumstances leading the Holy Father onto this Eucharistic line. The only thing that concerns those who believe the Vicar of Christ to be their heaven-appointed guide in the spiritual path is that he has set the seal of his cordial approval on the movement, and what is more, repeatedly expressed his earnest wish for its widest possible extension by his public acts.

* See Chap. I., 2d par.

† Cardinal Gennari, “Obligations induced by the Decree “*Sacra Tridentina Synodus*,” in the *Monitore Ecclesiastico*, p. 190.

We have often to dispel the Protestant delusion that Catholics believe the Popes, officially as such, to be guided, like the prophets of old by direct personal inspiration. Our reply is that—on the contrary—the Church of the Man-God is, by His will, carried on through the agency of men and by human methods, while God over-rules all, either by the divine “assistance” in matters of dogma, or by a special providence at least in all matters appertaining to the spiritual life. And what can concern the spiritual life more intimately than the proper use of the Sacrament especially designed by Christ for its divine support? It would, therefore, seem that anyone who urges the objection here dealt with has some need of a like explanation. The human process by which the Decree on Daily Communion entered into Pope Pius’s head matters little, or nothing. What does greatly matter, and must determine our mental attitude and line of conduct, is the authoritative decision that has issued deliberately from the Pope’s mouth.

CHAPTER III

THE GREAT STUMBLING BLOCK—THE HOLIDAYS

IT must be admitted that, in our present educational conditions, and with the style of modern home-life, vacation-time to a large extent neutralises school training and is not a little prejudicial to virtuous living in the case of many of our students. How many of them pass the time wholly, or even mainly in God's grace? Do not many of them return to school less good than they left it? Do not some lose in undesirable surroundings or companionships the influence of high ideals or the seeds of a higher vocation?

No doubt a certain proportion of those who have deteriorated during the holidays pick up again. Yet they may retain the sad traces of that troubled time. Others, alas! will now never realise the high promise they had given.

Perhaps, also, we have grown too much accustomed to such experiences to feel them as keenly as we ought. Nevertheless, some educators have fully grasped their

duty and sought out means for stemming the evil. They have kept the scholars, living in the same place, in touch with one another, arranged amusements, planned excursions for them, enlisted them in charitable works, kept them in touch with the clergy, invited them to take part in church services and encouraged them to receive the Sacraments. In some places the employment of these means is growing in favour. At the same time, they do not suit all the various circumstances of children in the large towns, neither are they practicable in the case of children who travel about, go away into the country, or to sea-side resorts. Then, they are not equally suitable to young people of all nationalities. As a rule, the British boy or girl is more independent, and does not care to have his or her holiday amusements or sports organised, except, perhaps, on rare occasions. Moreover, these devices are not directly conducive to the practice of frequent or daily Communion—which is what we are here concerned with. And yet “All depends upon That” as we should never tire of repeating with Dom Bosco.

The purpose of this chapter is to consider in a practical way, and with special reference to the holidays—these points:

I. The great importance of fidelity to Frequent Communion.

II. The causes leading to a falling off, or to complete abandonment of the practice.

III. The remedies that may be applied this evil.

IV. The return to school.

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF FREQUENT COMMUNION DURING VACATION.

The commission we have received from the Pope is that we promote daily Communion in establishments of education, of whatever kind.

That is Rome's "word of command." Now it will hardly enter into any one's mind to imagine that the Pope refers only to those portions of the year during which the young people are actually at school. On the other side, every one can easily see that the holidays are a powerful enemy to frequent Communion. In those institutions, even, where the "salutary practice" most flourishes during term time, a distinct falling off is usually to be noticed at the re-opening of schools. This decline is no doubt partly to be accounted for by the presence of new scholars, but it is still more the effect of holiday relaxation. Sometimes no small care is needed to secure a complete renewal of the saving régime.

Before enquiring into the causes of these break-downs, it should be noticed that they occur two or three times in the year—even after vacations of shorter length; and this is more than enough constantly to subject the whole practice of daily Communion to jeopardy. If it is to be maintained during term time it becomes a first necessity to procure its continuance during the holidays, that is to say, as far as altered conditions make such continuance morally possible. The thing to obtain is that the children shall keep faithfully to the rule of never missing a Communion through their own deliberate doing. That is what most matters. For if their will be right, a certain diminution in the number of Communions, due to obstacles that one cannot reasonably expect children to surmount, then—when return to school removes the hindrances and replaces them by extra facilities—everything will fall back into its proper place.

Our immediate aim, then, should be to prevent the scholastic year—a year of devoted labour on the part of the staff and of generous effort on the part of their charges—from being spoilt during the holidays. For then, more than at any other time, idleness, companionships, and sights of the world

combine with youthful passion and the Devil's temptations to destroy the spiritual life of the young, and with it, the development of their better selves.

As being in truth the fathers of these souls, we cannot contemplate this danger otherwise than with feelings of horror. A preservative must needs be found; a check must be put upon the ravages of an evil that ought not to exist.

That Preservative is frequent Communion, and there is no other that can compare with it—for efficiency. Formerly there may have been some ground for hesitation. But any one who doubted now would expose himself to the charge of little faith and defective obedience. “A hoary routine hinders the regenerating movement which the Pope seeks to impart to the Catholic world. Shall he appeal to us in vain? He offers us an unrivalled aid to a resurrection, and shall we not condescend to avail ourselves of it? To put it more plainly: Are we going to do as we are told, or not?*

It is not this or that temptation that proves fatal to a young soul, but the want of resisting force within him. The rush of passion overpowers the promptings of grace. Cause grace to abound and victory

* French “Messenger,” June, 1907.

is certain. We must not cut short our interest in our pupils merely because they have gone home. That would not be our attitude if, before getting there, they had to encounter perils on their journey. Educators imbued with an apostolic-spirit consider that "it is part of their duty to maintain their interest at all times in those whom, for nine or ten months in the year, have been their spiritual children, and have looked upon them as their spiritual Fathers. Fatherhood is not a transient relationship. It is either permanent, or else unreal." *

So let us thoroughly convince ourselves that our task is not confined to propagating frequent and daily Communion at school: it extends to doing all we can to secure its maintenance during the holidays. We must be fully aware how parents rely upon us for the religious training of their sons and daughters. They have a special right to do so as regards frequentation of the Sacraments. In his character as "dispenser of the mysteries of God" the priest is commissioned by the Church to invite souls to the Banquet of Life; this is at once his most pressing duty and his most consoling function. But if he be dumb; who will supply so culpable an omission?

* *Le Recrutement Sacerdotal*, March, 1902, p. 64.

II. THE CAUSES OF THE FALLING-OFF.

Many children who remain true to very frequent, or even daily, Communion during the scholastic year fall away, as we have said, during their holidays. It would be easy to throw stones at the children and ask what was the worth of the motives which led them to communicate so regularly while under the eyes of school authorities. The criticism would be unfair and superficial.

What are we to think of the motives which made them communicate during term-time? Precisely what one ought to think were they to approach the altar rails yet more frequently during their vacation. That is, that their motives are quite good and that these rested upon such conviction, as their years admit of, that the Blessed Sacrament will benefit their souls. Curious to say, no doubt would be thrown upon their application to study at school on account of their never looking at a book during holiday-time. And yet it would be just as reasonable to say: What is the worth of industry at school if study be severely tabooed at home. The motive for study, of course, was that such was the duty belonging to their condition as scholars: every incentive was provided all the same by the authorities to assist

them in complying with this duty. Holidays, however, imply of themselves a cessation, or at least a relaxing of study, and the scholar is well aware of the fact. On the contrary, the need of the soul—the true motive of Frequent Communion—exists in even greater force during vacation, but the child is *not* sufficiently persuaded of this fact.

Here, however, there are other factors in the situation to be counted with, the chief of which is the part played by masters and heads of schools.

The fact that a child has been in the habit of communicating at school will not of itself lead him to persevere afterwards—any more than industry in class is a guarantee against idleness and dissipation in the future. Undoubtedly, the incipient good habit affords fair promise of perseverance after. But it must be bolstered up by strong personal convictions. The obstacles likely to hinder perseverance in the salutary practice must be discussed and dealt with beforehand. This only means that with regard to Communion, as with other things, we have to succour the natural weakness of the child and fore-arm him against inconstancy.

Now, during the holidays, when he would fain keep up his Eucharistic habit, *every-*

thing seems to conspire against his feebleness.

First of all, he is deprived of the external facilities enjoyed by boarders in a college, or institution—such as the chapel so close at hand, confessors on the spot, and, even if he be a day-scholar, the regularity of spiritual exercises. In the case of many, the difficulty of forecasting the events of the day, late hours, constant change of place, distance from church, sometimes sheer impossibility—all these tend to break down his good will. And then interruptions have a tendency to repeat themselves.

In addition, the child notices that, in his neighbourhood, no impetus has as yet been given to the practice of frequent Communion. Oftentimes he will be the only one in the family who thinks of such a thing, perhaps he may even stand alone in a whole parish! Jansenistic prepossessions have not quite died out, and they will join in the assault wearing their disguise of piety and theology. Why, even now—six years after the Decree—there are good-living Catholics who have scarcely heard of such a thing. And does it never happen that a child comes across good priests and confessors who tell him: “A weekly Communion is quite enough for you. Do not undertake more than you will be able to keep up later on.”

(Or, as a parallel: "Do not earn ten pounds a week, now that you have the chance, because presently you will only be able to gain ten pence!")

At all events, the most favourably circumstanced ones will no longer receive from their usual confessor those unfailing words of encouragement, which the young need so much for making up their minds to that which they see to be best for them.

It may be frankly avowed that frequent Communion during vacation becomes in some instances veritably heroic, and we may well ask how many grown up men, if placed in like circumstances, would remain constant. Yet, in the above remarks, nothing has been said of the determined efforts of the Devil to prevent people from communicating. (Imitation of Christ, IV, 10.)

Instead, then, of pointing triumphantly to the shortage of Communions during the Holiday, and squeezing out of it an argument against frequent reception at more favourable times, would it not be better for priest-educators to make wholesome reflection and ask themselves: "What have we done, what has been done in our midst, to check this desertion of the Holy Table during vacation time?"

III. REMEDIES.

The best guarantee of constancy during the holidays is due *eucharistic training* received at school. This training includes two things: *Conviction* and *practice*. After speaking of these, some other means will be referred to which have been successfully adopted in different establishments.

A. Conviction.

We have already insisted on the importance of bringing home to the minds of the young two truths which form the very bed-rock of Pope Pius's Decree: 1. Daily Communion is the *desire of Jesus Christ and of the Church*—it is the *ordinary, normal diet of the soul in the state of grace*. 2. The principal object to be obtained by means of daily Communion is *the conquest of unlawful passion and preservation from mortal sin*.

If these principles are made to stand out clearly in the child's mind—with the fixity of axioms, they will resound in the depths of his conscience as a powerful invitation to daily Communion.

An explanation of the Church's teaching regarding the dispositions for receiving, and solution of the more common difficulties brought against the practice, will complete the eucharistic instructions. It has already

been verified by experience that the perseverance of children in holiday time has been secured best in those institutions where this instruction has been given most thoroughly. In one college several scholars kept up their daily Communion all through the vacation; others maintained two or three Communions a week; almost all of them received the Holy Eucharist every Sunday—a thing which formerly has been quite exceptional.

Instances like these, taken from actual life, expose the folly of deluding oneself with the notion that a superficial eucharistic teaching, especially when unaccompanied by actual practice, is enough to counteract the baneful influences of the holidays.

B. Practice at School.

It may be assumed as fairly evident that the number of Communions in the holidays will be in direct *proportion* to their frequency in term-time. By this is meant that the child who receives oftener at school will receive oftener at home than one who communicates more rarely at school. As a matter of observation, it has been found that the *absolute* number of holiday Communions is smaller than that of school ones. But, under ordinary conditions, those who have been more assiduous at school will

show greater constancy than others, and this not only on account of their being more fervent, but because their experience of the tangible benefits of Communion makes them love it more.

The inference to be drawn from these facts is plain. With a special eye to holidays, our aim must be to procure the *greatest possible* measure of frequency *at school*. We must cause Our Lord to be really loved, and help the child to develop such sincere eucharistic devotion that to miss a Communion shall be felt as a real privation.

And yet there are some who make this decline of Communions a plea for *reducing* them at school, relying upon that specious fallacy: "People had better adopt habits such as they can keep to at all times."

This is an hallucination which we must never tire of combating. It reflects upon the Pope, whom it virtually represents as running after a phantom. It is demoralising to earnest priests through depriving them of encouragement, and it is ruinous to souls, since it understands at one stroke both Communion at college and Communion during the vacation.

By this system the present is moulded upon the conjectured future—which is the wrong way about. The present should be

made a preparation for the future. No, we ought *not* to shape our course according to supposed future contingencies, but devote all our energy to making provision against them. We should *not* aim at the formation of habits "that people will keep up afterwards," but habits that will develop a vigorous Christian vitality—habits that people *ought* and *intend*, to keep up.

In the present matter, the habit cannot be said to have been acquired by those who content themselves with a monthly or weekly Communion. Those, on the contrary, possess it who are willing to put themselves to some inconvenience in order to partake daily of the Bread of Life, and so respond to their Saviour's invitation.

This is the habit which the Holy Father desires to see formed by all the faithful, and bids us "promote" in all educational establishments. Our business is to obey without dispute, and prepare for the future a race of Catholics who will go to the Altar daily through having acquired this holy habit in their childhood.

Three sentences seem sufficient to dispose of this mischievous argument based on the decline of Communions during Holidays:

1. It is no reason for not communicating while it is possible.

2. It is an additional reason for using the opportunity.

3. The Pope counts upon the youth of to-day for the creation of a *thoroughly communicant* society.

And we should put this plainly to our young folk.

So far we have only dealt with the more remote remedies for the evil in question. Amongst the more immediate ones to be applied, some have to do directly with the child himself, while others concern those around him.

C. Exhortation at the Approach of the Holidays.

The main lines for such a discourse are simple enough: "You will be exposed to greater spiritual danger, you will be less sure of spiritual helps, you will have more time at your free disposal. Do not be less faithful; rather try to be more generous than when circumstances are more in your favour."

How great is their need of courage and supernatural strength exposed as they are to the inconstancy of their youth and so liable to temptation! Now, more than ever, travelling, touring, and sport tend to dissipate all earnest pursuit of a christian

life. As Leo XIII., pointed out, the craving for pleasureable excitement has become a perfect plague. Only Communion will keep sin at arm's length and preserve the young from worldly excesses.

A *direct appeal to generosity* often has the happiest results with the young. "Would you venture to tell Our Lord: 'When Communion gives me no trouble, I do not mind going to You; but if it means some inconvenience or effort, such as getting up earlier, going out in unfavourable weather, putting off my breakfast a little, or braving human respect, then, Lord, You must excuse me. I do not see my way to that?' Then, do not say by your acts what you would not dare to say with your lips."

Something better still. By means of their example, young people could often become *conductors* to the Holy Table. It would be good to urge them to embark upon so fruitful an apostolate: On some days you will be the only communicants. In deferring to the Pope's wishes, some must necessarily be the first. Be proud of the honour, and preach the crusade of daily Communion on your knees at the Communion rails. Perhaps some one will ask a reason for your conduct; and you can refer them to the wish of the Pope. They

will, please God, notice the effects of Communion in your manner of life, and thus you will attract souls to Jesus Christ."

More than one parish—says Père Lintelo*—could be quoted in which the children on holiday have contributed largely to a more frequent use of the Sacraments.

There is a class of young people who must not be forgotten in the exhortation—*day-scholars*, who come to school by train. For these Communion during the course of the week is often out of the question. They should, therefore, be urged to avail themselves of the extra facilities which vacation supplies in their particular case, for making a generous effort to communicate every day.

* Père Lintelo records the testimony of a Jesuit missionary at Trichinopoly, telling how he had banded a number of young students together in a League of Charity during their holidays. They received Holy Communion at least twice a week, though this involved very early rising and a long walk, and some had the courage to go to Communion alone in various parishes of Malabar, where such a thing had never been known before. Through their means several heathens, dying of cholera received baptism. And yet they most thoroughly enjoyed their holidays. No wonder they were happy: for they kept good consciences themselves, and did much good to others.

*D. The Child Needs to be Forearmed
and Encouraged.*

A great point is that the number of his Communion during vacation should be determined before he goes home. An important decision like this, liable to be assailed by temptation, should not be left to caprice or chance. The frequency with which he will approach the Holy Table should be fixed only after he has been enlightened as to the dangers to be encountered and he has resolved to overcome these, after weighing the difficulties which are likely to hinder the fulfilment of his resolution. Once the decision has been arrived at and made known to his director it should not be altered. If some modifications should afterwards prove unavoidable, at least he should be able to say that it was not the result of mere caprice.

And one should enter into details with him as far as possible, as regards the hour of rising and for Mass, the choice of a church, and confession, if he means to confess. A child has little foresight and is liable to be taken unawares. Another important piece of advice to give him is to put his scheme into practice *without delay*, from the very first morning of the holidays.

In a matter of this kind putting off means failure; to hesitate is to be lost.

The determination to act manfully from the first having thus been taken, the child may still need a little word of encouragement during the course of the vacation. "It would be a good thing for confessors to induce each of his penitents to send a line once or twice during that period to let him know how things are going on with regard to Communion. No doubt this is no infallible recipe for securing fidelity in all cases; for the temptations to relax as the holidays advance are often plentiful even in the most exemplary families. Still, the plan might certainly serve as a spur to many children and give their spiritual advisers an opportunity for rousing the careless ones."* It is one that has succeeded admirably whenever employed.

E. Holiday Leagues.

In some educational establishments the scholars have been encouraged to make little agreements among themselves to communicate daily, or so many times a week, or at least once a week—according to the opportunities which each member of this

* *Lambert, Le Régime Sauveur*, p. 382.

“Holiday League for Communion” expects to have. It is preferable perhaps, that this confederation—once it has been suggested and explained—should not be *organised* by authorities, but left entirely to the activity of the children themselves. We are aware, however, that the plan has occasionally been adopted of inviting the children to register the number of Communions they intend making and to hand the record to some authority. The leaguers, under this system, sign their names on a form of engagement which is clearly explained to them *as involving no obligation under sin of any kind*, by which they determine to “receive Communion very frequently during the holidays.” And the above should always be the understanding of all such leagues. The form adds: “This is not a *promise*, but a sincere declaration of what each one has firmly resolved to do during the vacation.”

Sometimes it is further arranged that at stated times, agreed upon in advance, each leaguer shall notify to a school authority the number of Communions made. Possibly the average Saxon *boy*, at least, would regard this amount of method as an intolerable nuisance. Yet perhaps it might suit well enough in particular cases.

F. The Parents.

But it is not only with the scholar himself that we have to reckon.

There are still too many parents influenced by ignorance, or false notions, who put stumbling-blocks in the way of their children's piety, thereby unconsciously compromising the welfare and even safety of their souls. Inexpensive publications exist intended to beget in parents a frame of mind more in harmony with the instructions of Our Lord's Vicar.*

Very often a child, without failing in due respect, could show a publication of this sort to his father or mother when his desire to go so often to Communion is treated as fanciful, or excessive. In certain cases a confessor might without imprudence write a tactful word to a parent, showing that the child's wish is not only sound, but strongly recommended as "most salutary" by that authority which every faithful Catholic will regard as decisive. Tactful communications like these might powerfully second the good will of the child.

* *E.g.*, "Parents and Frequent Communion of Children" (Sands & Co.). "Spoiling the Divine Feast" (Washbourne & Co.). "Notes on Daily Communion."

G. Co-operation of the Clergy.

It is necessary to touch, however lightly, upon this subject. No doubt the hindrance to Communion in the holidays, about to be mentioned is less likely to occur now than it was a few years ago when a knowledge of the Decrees had not become so general. Nevertheless, facts of experience prove that a child may still come across a priest during vacation time who looks with disfavour on young and occasional parishioners whose eucharistic practice—learned at school—contrasts somewhat markedly with that of the regular flock. We need not dwell upon the reflections suggested by this contrast.

It might, or might not be expedient for the ordinary confessor to endeavour to enlist the priest's sympathy in favour of the child.

But if the difficulty occur in the confessional, the school confessor, if consulted by his ordinary penitent, will know how to guide him discreetly according to the circumstances. At all events, while insisting with him strongly upon the necessity of the state of grace, as a condition for Communion, he will make it equally plain that Confession is never obligatory unless clear mortal sin has been committed since the last Confession.* Nor does the length of

* See Article III, Decree on Daily Communion; also

time since that event alter the case. Moreover, the constant advice of his ordinary Confessor amply satisfies the *recommendation*, in Article V of Decree, as to seeking the advice of the confessor.*

Père Lintelo next allots a separate section of his "Directoire" to "Oeuvres de Vacances," or plans for gathering young people from school together for amusements, excursions, etc.—always with a view to influencing them spiritually. One item in these schemes is a special Mass on certain days, which gives an opportunity for addressing to them a few words to encourage them to avoid sin and keep to their religious duties—especially the Sacraments. This arrangement, where possible, would add another support to perseverance in frequent Communion in holiday-time. Of course numbers are needed for the efficiency of such

Decree, Feb. 10, 1906, on Confession as a condition for Plenary Indulgences.

* This consultation with the confessor, however, it should be remembered—albeit desirable, does not constitute a *third necessary condition* for Daily Communion. Nor is there anything in the Decree nor in the leading Theological Commentaries upon it, to show that the penitent, who laudably practise this point of "greater" prudence and "more abundant" merit, is even *recommended* to seek such advice *repeatedly*, and still less at every Confession. See "Ministry of Daily Communion," pp. 40-43. (Washbourne & Co.)

organisation, and these would seldom be available in our English towns or country resorts. National peculiarities of character again, may render such plans less acceptable in one country than in another. Still it was quite worth while to have mentioned this form of apostolic zeal if only to point the moral that local priests can often do much to maintain the eucharistic fervour of children on holiday. A first requisite, of course, is that priests themselves should be intimately convinced of the immense importance of frequent Communion for the spiritual safety and development of the young. This they will hardly be unless they take the trouble of studying the subject.

If daily Communion be merely regarded as an extra source of trouble, they will certainly "have the Decree somewhere or other," and there it will remain collecting dust.

IV. THE RETURN TO SCHOOL.

In not a few colleges the fidelity of the children to Communion during the vacation reveals itself in the first few days of the term. One head of a college wrote: Whereas, in former years, it took our scholars at least a fortnight to get back to their practices,

now in two or three days the Communion become as numerous as they were previous to breaking up."

But in spite of all our efforts, a certain slackness will show itself as regards approach to the Holy Table. Well, we must return to the charge, and repeat in January the impetus administered after the summer holidays, and in April, that given in January. This will be the aim of public addresses and of private direction. All the usual facilities for Confession should be provided from *the very first day* of the school-term.

To conclude. It would be easy to show, if space allowed, how the practice of very frequent or daily Communion—besides the rich graces which it brings and the supernatural influence which it exerts—confers upon the child invaluable benefits as regards *formation of character*—a weak point of our times. For daily Communion involves self-denial. It instills habits of prompt rising, leads to a ready acceptance of small mortifications to self-indulgence; it stimulates effort for preparing to receive the Divine Guest more worthily and for pleasing Him after the reception. Repeated day after day—above all in impressionable childhood and youth and under the two conditions which, as the Church teaches, makes its

fruitfulness certain,* it strengthens the spirit of faith and love for God and our neighbour, creates eucharistic habits, and, in a word, begets a christian life.

No educator who realises the true meaning of "education" can any longer hesitate to strive his utmost † that pupils may receive the Holy Eucharist as frequently during the holidays as during term-time—or as nearly so as unavoidable obstacles permit. But it should be observed that a few general remarks on the subject made on the very eve of their going home, when their minds are filled with visions of holiday joys, are but a feeble counterpoise to the untoward influences to which they are about to be exposed.

Far more powerful means than these are required. Hence, in the preceding pages an attempt has been made to suggest the remote, as well as the proximate preparation for communion during vacation, and methods by which it may be further supported.

On their return to school, the children will be just what Communion has made them. Our task is to excite in them a strong hunger for It.

* See Article III, Decree on Daily Communion " . . . , it is impossible," etc.

† " Cf. *Omnem impendant operam*" . . . Letter to Catholic Episcopate, April 10, 1907.

CHAPTER IV

CAUSES OF FAILURE

AT this point, the "Directoire" gives a chapter devoted to "The Teaching of Experience." It mainly consists of a long list of testimonials to the beneficent results of frequent and daily Communion in colleges and institutions for the youth of both sexes, and especially for boys. These evidences, coming from Heads of houses, Spiritual Directors, and Professors, cover eight pages of close print. Their genuine character is confirmed by the moderation of their tone and the scrupulous mention of anything that detracts from the perfection of the success obtained.

Considering the Belgian author's long and far-reaching advocacy of the eucharistic Decrees and his large correspondence with promoters of daily Communion in various lands, it is unlikely that these testimonies to success should refer only to Belgium. But even were it so, their significance would remain undiminished. Just as Our Lord's Sacraments were not designed for one sex,

but for men as well as women, so neither was His loving scheme for preserving man's supernatural life restricted to any particular race or nation. The Eucharist is as *Catholic* in its fruitfulness for young and old, as is the Church to which this Divine Gift has been committed.*

As Père Lintelo observes: "We have a large mass of evidence to prove that obedience to the Holy See in the present matter draws down abundant blessings on a house." Amongst those quoted by him: "Frequent and daily Communion simply transforms the physiognomy of an establishment."

Speaking of Belgium, His Eminence, Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines, declared in a report which he personally tendered to the Holy Father, in 1909: "Already in Belgium an experience of two years has demonstrated—in the case of a large number of parishes and in most of our educational establishments—that frequent Communion brings forth fruits of piety far exceeding anything that the most sanguine would have dared to hope for."

It would be easy to accumulate instances

* Thus it is impossible to treat seriously an objection to the practice of Frequent Communion which formerly made itself heard in a Teutonic land: "It is not suitable for the German temperament."

of particular cases in which frequent or daily Communion has worked wonders. And these marked effects are not strictly limited to the supernatural order. Cases might be cited here, with names and circumstances, in which children have shown an almost immediate sharpening of wits for their studies and a general awakening of latent energy for the purpose of life.

The uprooting of evil habits, the development of zeal for souls and for self-sacrifice, the taming of a very bad temper, even victory over intemperance—these are among the fruits known to have been produced by daily Communion when all other remedies had failed.

With such testimony of experience before us we may well ask ourselves with the “Directoire:” “If, while holding the secret of such glorious results, we neglect or despise it, what excuse can we possibly offer?”

But now to our main subject—Causes of failure.

Among these, some would allege *unfavourable human material*. No doubt there are soils less favourably conditioned than others. A worldly atmosphere, for instance, is not one in which the spirit of faith can greatly flourish. Again, an entirely different order of impediments have to be

faced in large cities, such as do not hamper young children under discipline. It is questionable whether any really intractable soil exists in educational houses—and with these only are we here concerned.

An example is on record of a college in France where all the circumstances seemed to combine against the establishment of daily Communion. Habits were already formed, strong prejudices prevailed against the practice, the students were continually absorbed in a combination of study and manual work, and their earlier upbringing had not been uniformly religious. Added to this, these youths in their 'teens were touched with the spirit of religious indifference, were strongly influenced by human respect, and were likely to be exposed even to petty persecution outside the school. And yet the Principal of that establishment was able to say after Communion had been propagated: "During these twenty-six years that I have had to deal with young men, I have never seen anything to equal it."

One cannot, therefore ascribe failures wholly to environment.

Should they not rather be attributed to half-measures and indecision on the part of those in charge? People may easily be

paralysed by those fears which have been considered in an earlier chapter.

Perhaps people have not boldly attempted to introduce *daily* Communion for all the scholars; *no general impulse* has been given by means of public preaching; people have been satisfied with attempts in the case of individual youths; the object was not heartily desired, or feeble means have been used to compass it.

Good results are sometimes quoted as having been obtained by opposite means to that of giving from the first a public impetus to the practice. But on examination these fruits will be found inferior to those gathered by the other method, even in less favourable circumstances.

One fertile source of disappointment is *divergence of views among the staff*, as has been pointed out.

Or again, people content themselves with partial results through not having properly grasped the principles of the Decree. They fail to realise the main point of its teaching, namely, that Communion every day is

THE NORMAL DIET OF A SOUL IN GRACE:
THAT IN NOT A FEW CASES IT IS INDISPENSIBLE—ESPECIALLY IN THE TIME OF YOUTH—FOR KEEPING CONTINUALLY IN GOD'S GRACE.

Neglect of this principle leads to a fallacy like the following: "In this college, we have no daily communicants, but many of the scholars go to Communion two or three times a week, *which is perhaps better.*"

No! It is, on the contrary, "better" to follow the Pope and "promote" daily Communion so that it may come to be practised by the greater number. It is "better" that as many children as possible should altogether avoid mortal sin. Some of them, most probably, will not do this unless they receive Our Lord every day. The state of grace is the first condition for a christian life. It is "better" not to be satisfied with obtaining *something*, but to obtain as much as ever we can by giving our best energies to the work.

*Nil actum reputans, si quid superesset agendum.**

That is the motto of the zealous. Lastly the "better" thing is that both confessors and preachers should obey the papal word of command: "they must exhort. . . frequently and with much zeal" to frequent and daily Communion. (Article VI.)

It is true we may earnestly strive for our object, and yet the fruit may prove dis-

* Deeming our success as none,
If aught as yet be left undone.

proportionate to the efforts made. The following are possible explanations: Lack of quiet in the chapel, due to people constantly coming and going—through want of supervision; leaving the young ones wholly to their own devices for preparation and thanksgiving; constant and unnotified change in the order of the day, so that the children, unwarned beforehand, are uncertain whether they will be able to obtain Communion or not. This might happen in some schools on the morning after some big holiday.

A POWERFUL CAUSE OF FAILURE.

But of all hindrances to the work of promotion, the chief is a *lack of facilities for Confession*. This defect may lead to an interruption in the flow of Communion fatal to any who may be struggling against some besetting passion. In their case, a fall, and consequent discouragement, will often undo for good and all the spiritual cure begun. Then, there are tender but much tempted souls that accuse themselves of guilt, not distinguishing between volition and feeling—especially if the assault of temptation be prolonged. Unless they can get to a confessor for settling their doubts, they will stay away from the Holy Table.

There should be certain fixed times, well known to the scholars when one or two confessors will always be accessible, though not necessarily for a long time. In institutions where it is customary for priests to hear confessions in their rooms, communicants should be able, by rising and dressing promptly, to visit them before Mass, or if preferred—in the chapel confessionals.* The mere sign, given to the authority in charge, of a wish to go to the priest should be held to satisfy all requirements of discipline, and no sort of question should ever be asked as to reason for going to him—and still less any comment be made.

A GREAT ENEMY OF DAILY COMMUNION:
FOOD AT RISING.

The anxiety for children's *bodily* health characterising our times may lead to a custom which is the bane of daily Communion, providing light refreshments for children immediately after rising and before Mass.

There may be, in a boarding institution, cases of peculiarly delicate children whom it is of serious importance to fortify with food against the moderate effort of prayers and daily Mass. But I think those most experienced in the care of children will

* See "A Difficulty," p. 333.

admit that genuine cases of this necessity are extremely rare—outside that of convalescence from some serious illness. “The Doctor” pleads a parent—“is most emphatic upon the point that Johnny (or Mollie) should take food the *very first thing*.” Very likely. From the Doctor’s standpoint—especially if he be not a good Catholic one—anything whatever that makes for the well-being of the body is of paramount importance. He has no concern with souls. But Catholics, in charge of the young, have no business to adopt the view that the body is never to sacrifice one tittle to the good of the immortal soul.

At all events, if one or two genuine cases should arise, it would be fatal to the “desire of Jesus Christ and of the Church” to make such early refreshments accessible *to all children alike*. By such a plan, you invite the food-loving animal, called “boy,” and sometimes—though less universally—called “girl”—to choose between receiving the Life of their life and gratifying their natural propensity for eating some forty minutes or so earlier. For that would be the average extent of the fast in well-regulated establishments.

But is it not good to give occasions to the young for voluntarily denying them-

selves? Unfortunately, those who stand in greatest need of sacramental grace for conquering themselves are just the ones least likely to yield to the attractions of self-denial. In other less important matters of piety it may be good to try the constancy of children. But Communion is far too vital a thing to be thus hazarded. The custom here deprecated cannot be called "promoting" frequent Communion; yet that is precisely what the Vicar of Christ demands. If anything, it is handicapping the practice.

This is a point upon which educators, anxious to carry out the Decrees, should show themselves very unyielding towards parents, unless the case be evidently a *bona fide* one. Better far to risk losing a pupil or two than give entrance to a relaxation so prejudicial to the due eucharistic nourishment of the many.

THE FATAL CUP OF TEA IN BED.*

Not the least objectionable feature of this early food taking is the habit it engenders *for after life*. Its result is—more particularly with the female sex—that the "Early Cup of Tea," before rising, becomes an irresistible habit and an all but invincible

* Cf. Imitation of Christ, Bk. IV., Chapt. 10, n.i.

enemy to frequent Communion. Reference has previously been made to the unspeakable fallacy, entertained by some, that it is vain to train children to very frequent Communion because—as it is alleged—“they will never keep it up afterwards.” Well, this early refreshment system prevents the positive good of frequent eucharistic nourishment at least during the most critical period of children’s lives, and—besides—makes it pretty certain that there will be only too little “to keep up” after they leave school, and have to face the temptations of the world.

ARBITRARY LIMITATION ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Another hindrance to the spread of frequent or daily Communion is the mistake of telling children in general—on account of their peculiar circumstances—“It is enough for you to go once a week”—“or once a month.” It is a like error, when addressing Guilds or Confraternities (Children of Mary, etc.), so to insist on the rule of *monthly Communion* as to give the impression that this is the final goal to be wished for and aimed at. Very likely the standard of frequency laid down, in either case, is the most that is reasonably possible to the audience—or to the greater number.

But that is no reason for putting forward as the *desirable* standard anything short of the one set up in the Decree for “*all the faithful.*” This mistake is specially to be avoided in instructing children for their First Communion. Children—whether of the leisured, or of the poorer classes—should have given to them the pure and unadulterated teaching of the Decree *from the very first.* Our meaning will be made clearer by contrasting two kinds of speeches that might be addressed to a First Communion Class:

“You want to know how often you are to go to Communion, after your First. One a week is enough for you. You understand, now: you had better make it once a week.” This—without further explanation or reference to the Pope’s Decree.

Now for the right way of putting it: “Our Lord, Who loves little children very much (here gives a graphic account of the Gospel incident), would like you to have His Heavenly Breakfast every morning. That would be nice, wouldn’t it? But I daresay many of you cannot do that. So He wont be displeased if you don’t. Let those who can, come each day, or at least several times a week. But at all events you can all come to Communion every Sunday, and perhaps

Saturday too, as that is not a school-day. The great thing, dear children, is never to miss a Communion any day you can get it, and Jesus will love and bless you for coming. "And remember that you are never obliged to go to Confession first unless you have been thinking or doing something you knew all the time to be very, very wrong—a mortal sin, the Catechism calls it—since your last confession."

This gives the right idea. It is the plain truth, and children should be given the truth. Proper instruction about *Confession* is, of course, presupposed.

"SPOILING THE DIVINE FEAST." *

N.B. This seems a suitable place for protesting against *an utterly unintelligible practice* on the part of those responsible for First Communicants. A strange thing often happens. The child makes its First Communion, and then does not go to Communion the next day, nor the day after—although it could easily do so. Perhaps it is directed not to receive Our Lord again for a week or more. Why, and oh, why? There is that little soul, a living temple of the All-Holy God, by grace and innocence a consecrated

* See 1d. booklet with the above title—Washbourne & Co.

Tabernacle of the Holy Sacrament, adorned with all those jewels of grace lavished upon it in that First Divine Embrace! When, pray, will it be a more fitting abode for Our Sacramental Lord than now? But no! A second Communion after the First, and a third on the day following, is not to be thought of, much less suggested to the child of God! "The best preparation for Communion to-morrow" says more than one Saint—"is to have been to Communion to-day." But then, some of us are so much more spiritual than the Saints, so much better qualified to guide souls in the path to heaven than the Head Shepherd of Christ's flock on earth. So Article VI of the Decree "*Quam Singulari*" remains for such persons a dead letter.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

To those more especially whom we know to be hindered by circumstances from really frequent Communion, we should do well to recommend the practice of spiritual Communion—that is, a prayer in the shape of a *desire* to receive Our Lord in Sacramental Communion.* This would feed the desire

* Spiritual Books often make a tremendous business of spiritual Communion, prescribing a number of prayers, which are apt to scare people off. A *short* and *simple* aspiration to Our Lord, saying how much we wish we could

of children for Communion and keep the matter before their minds.

It is true there are not a few souls who are content with nothing except the best; and if the best be set before them, they will seize it promptly. But a large number of other souls are strongly influenced by the law of *moral* gravitation downwards: and if fairly good results are to be obtained with these, we shall have to aim high above the mark. In their case, exhortations to daily Communion, though these should be given, may not produce *literal* fruit; but they will considerably increase the number of Communions. Thus we notice, in the case of those who cannot altogether shake off their old habits of thought, that the eucharistic movement has, for instance, made weekly communicants out of people who were formerly but monthly or quarterly ones.

It all comes to this: let us preach the true and full doctrine to all, and trust for ultimate success to the inherent power of the truth and the grace of God.

receive Him is quite enough. A short expression of sorrow for sin preceding is not unfitting, e.g., Jesus I am sorry for offending your goodness! Jesus, Food and Medicine of my soul, I wish I could receive you." See English "Messenger of the Sacred Heart", August, 1911. "Spiritual Communion" (Messenger Office, Wimbledon).

CHAPTER V.

SAMPLE OF AN ADDRESS TO CHILDREN BEFORE THE HOLIDAYS*

WE all know the melancholy effects on Jack (or Jane) of "all work and no play." They both need holidays for refreshing their minds and for the benefit of their health. All the same, the time of vacation has always been considered, by those who know, a time of some danger to the souls of young people. ("Rot!" cries Jack: "Silly!" exclaims more polite Jane. Well, but is it ei her? Just think a bit, and you will see that I am not merely croaking.) During holiday-time occasions for breaking our Lord's commandments—in other words, *temptations to sin*—are certainly more plentiful, and this just at the very time when the religious helps for being good are less abundant, or, owing to the excitement of pleasure, less used by younger folk.

* This scheme of Père H. Durand, adapted by the present writer, is reprinted in its English form by the permission of Rev. D. Bearne, S.J., Editor of the English "Messenger of the Sacred Heart."

Let me make a comparison which will help you to see the importance of what I am going to urge upon you—namely, that during the holidays you should *receive Holy Communion*, if not more frequently, at least *not less* frequently than you have been taught to do at your school.

Holidays have been compared to a time of *war*, a time of *famine*, and a time of *plague*. Such a comparison will very likely seem a great exaggeration to those more lucky ones among you whose circumstances make it easy for them to keep good during the vacation. But, unfortunately, it is no exaggeration at all in the case of a very large number of students on holiday.

Let me show you that it is not.

A time of war. God tells us in the Holy Scriptures that: “The life of man on earth is a warfare”—a time of *fighting*. This state of war for our souls comes from original sin—the sin of Adam—which, in spite of Baptism, has left our souls exposed to attacks from the Devil, from our own evil inclinations, and from the world around us. It is a curious fact, which you may have yourselves noticed, that these three agents of sin have less power over us when we are busy and occupied, and far more power when we are idle and left to our own thoughts

and devices. Satan, who hates you for being the children of God, watches the holiday-making scholar and sees that he (or she) has no settled work to do, and is no longer protected from mischief by college rules. So, being no fool, he "puts on the screw," and increases his temptations. Then, you will very likely mix with people who may attack or ridicule your Catholic Faith, and try—as they put it—"to knock all that pious nonsense out of you." Some may even try to persuade you out of the rules of modesty and purity, in speech and conduct, taught you at school, describing them as "scruples" and "nun's talk."

Oh! there can be no doubt of it, my dear friends. Holidays are for very many indeed a time for fighting "the good fight" for our Blessed Lord. In war, soldiers need arms for their defence. What is the best weapon of the Christian soldier? It is the Blessed Sacrament—that object of *terror* to the Devil. The soldier needs nourishing food—good rations—to give him strength for the fatigue of long marches and of battle. Our "Rations" are that which the Church calls the "Bread of the Strong"—the heavenly Bread of Holy Communion.

Believe me, then: if you mean to be true to the flag of Jesus Christ, and overcome His

enemies and yours, go to *Communion*, go often, go daily if possible, especially during the holidays.

A time of famine. Yes, the holidays are nothing less, for many young souls. You boys and girls—particularly the boys—are quite alive to the need your bodies have of lots of food. The school providers have ample proof of it. Perhaps, too, you look forward to having nicer and more varied “grub” when you go home. Well, the poor soul wants feeding also, to keep it strong and healthy. For this reason, at a really Catholic school, you are supplied with prayers, instructions, spiritual reading, and, above all, with devout Communions. All these spiritual foods you have in plenty during term-time. You feed upon them almost as a matter of course.

But how is it during the holidays? Your homes may be exemplary as regards the use of these spiritual helps for aught I know. I hope so. Still, you will be left a good deal to yourselves, free to choose your own employments, especially in the matter of religious practices. Likely enough you will hear no sermons, read no pious books, say no extra prayers. Clearly this is a *loss*; and common-sense requires that this loss should be repaired by a more plentiful use

of that Strong Nourishment—the Holy Eucharist—which has the savour of all supernatural foods, and is able to replace them all.

Go, then, to Communion during vacation—go often, try to go every day. For clearly your soul needs It far more than during school-time.

A time of plague. This means that during holidays you go into the world, and for a time will breathe an air charged with much wickedness and disbelief. Do not mistake me! I speak of the world outside your homes. For I prefer to think that your families are good, even if not wholly Catholic, and that the parents and relatives with whom you live will give you nothing but the best example and every encouragement in your Catholic piety and virtue. All the same you will only have to pass from your home into the streets, into places of amusement, into companionships and conversation with young folk so as to meet with bad example, evil suggestions, sights of sin, worldly talk, undesirable books, papers, magazines, pictures, and other traps to faith and virtue. These will appeal first to your curiosity and imprudent thirst for the knowledge of good and evil, and then may become an occasion of serious sin to you.

Here then are the poisonous germs of the sin-plague—noxious microbes of all sorts. And just as when catching illnesses are about, the doctor urges the healthy to feed well, so as to resist infection; so if you, dear students, wish to keep the spiritual health you brought with you from school and escape the plague of mortal sin I pray you *to feed up your souls well*.

Does not our Lord tell us through His Church that Communion is “the antidote whereby we are cleansed from venial stains and preserved from mortal ones”?

Does not Pius X. Christ’s Vicar, call the Eucharist The Divine Remedy for all our spiritual weaknesses? Once again then, receive the Heavenly Medicine, so lovingly provided you by the Divine Physician—His own Body and Blood. Receive It *often*, and if possible *every morning* of your holidays.

Do not rob the Sacred Heart, in a few weeks of careless enjoyment, of all the holy fruits which He has produced in you by months of labour, while visiting your unworthy souls.

Do not cheat yourselves with the delusion that your holidays will be less bright and happy because of their being spent in closer company with the Friend of friends and kept

innocent by His daily or frequent embrace in Holy Communion.

Some little self-denial will be required—less late hours, perhaps, and somewhat prompter rising. But what of that? You are not going to rob our Lord of His self-humbling wish to see the cleanly faces of all His children round His Holy Breakfast Table, just for the sake of a tiny sensual gratification? Would you allow a small sacrifice to stand in your way if the invitation were to King George's table at Buckingham Palace?

Let me end with a true story. At Easter a few years ago a priest of my acquaintance visited the workhouse of Xfield in order to give Easter Communion to the Catholic inmates. As the men had already been doing work for two or three hours, the Father feared that one or other of them might have broken his fast. He put the question gently to one of them. The poor fellow raised himself up with dignity and answered: "Father, I am going to have the Best Breakfast a man can get on this earth!"

And so it is! A Breakfast so supporting that it will serve also for the soul's dinner and supper. You could not go home with a better resolution in your hearts, offered, perhaps, to our Lord in the closing Com-

munion of the school-term, than the following "*I will never miss a single Communion in the holidays through my own doing.*" Always remember, too, that previous *Confession* is never *necessary*, except when a clear and fully deliberate *mortal* sin has been committed since the last Confession.

CHAPTER VI.

CONDITIONS FOR PROGRESS

I. AS REGARDS THE PRIEST HIMSELF.

THE rich fruits which Daily Communion brings forth in souls and in houses where it prevails, should make every priest-educator anxious to know the price at which he may secure an equally fruitful apostolate. First and foremost, he needs to free himself from unconscious prejudices and *conform his ways of thinking to the mind of the Decree*. It was upon this point that Cardinal Mercier laid so much stress at a meeting of heads of colleges.*

It is hardly possible any longer to misapprehend the meaning and force of the papal directions; and yet so deeply rooted and widespread are the old prepossessions that unless the new ideas are fortified by study, we may soon become Jansenistical again without knowing it.

Mgr. Guilibert, Bishop of Fréjus, found it necessary not so long ago to send the following lines to his clergy: "The right

* *Vie Diocesaine*. Malines, for 1907, p. 265.

of every Christian to approach the Holy Table frequently, and even daily, provided only his conscience be free from mortal sin and he have a 'right intention' (of becoming better through uniting himself to Jesus Christ) lays upon pastors and confessors the duty of encouraging, promoting and facilitating this practice."*

Neither former contrary habits, nor dislike affect the question; the Holy Father wishes the Catholic body to resume the custom of the early centuries. Spiritual guides have no commission to criticise the Saviour's desire, interpreted to them by His Vicar; their business is to reconcile the minds of their flocks to the custom.

In order to repair or complete his eucharistic education, a priest will have to keep constantly in view the text of the main Decree and other documents confirming it. Then he should make himself at home

*A further witness to the fact that the examples of right intention gives us in Art. 2 of the Decree need not be explicitly and distinctly before the mind of the communicant. Neither need *all* of them be made use of—any more than all the samples given of *wrong* intention are needed to constitute the same. As other interpreters of the Decree point out, the general intention of *profiting spiritually* by the Communion, suffices. As our spiritual advancement pleases God, a person who approaches for that object *virtually* approaches for "the purpose of pleasing God."

with theological, or ascetical works which explain the Decree, or derive their inspiration from it. The sort of study here mentioned will have the further advantage of kindling our zeal, and will enable us to conquer difficulties—often of secondary magnitude—and easily to be surmounted by good will, tact and perseverance.

Nothing will impress a child so much as contact with an apostolic soul. Its own soul will begin to kindle at the touch and will expand. It is hardly possible that a child should not feel fired in some measure with eucharistic fervour if the priest, who directs it and speaks to it of our Lord, be one of those incendiaries conscious of their duty to spread broadcast over the earth that divine fire which Jesus came to cast upon it.

“Brother Priests”—Père Lintelo pleads—“let us be mindful of our office as teachers and apostles, and weigh well the responsibility attaching to our ministry, so that we may escape the reproach of the Children’s Lover, become our sovereign Judge: “Little ones asked for bread, and there was no one to break it unto them.” *

If we ourselves be but filled with love for our Lord and for souls, these souls will flock to the Eucharist at our call. As

* Lam. IV., 4.

Pius X. said, addressing his priests at the Congress of Rome, in 1905, "Let us not leave idle in the tabernacle the most precious Treasure that God has given us!"

II. FIDELITY TO DAILY COMMUNION.

Be it here supposed that no hindrances beyond the control of the will, and no urgent duties belonging to a person's state of life—incompatible with frequent Communion—stand in the way of the practice. Under this supposition, it is to daily Communion that we must strive to train children.

The reasons are plain:

I. It is daily Communion that the Pope desires us to propagate; for, it is noticeable that the title of the Decree of December 1905 is "On *Daily* Reception of the Eucharist" (De *Quotidiana* Eucharistiæ Sump-tione"). Hence the following rightly sets forth the scope of the Decree: "What is the relation—in the intention of the Holy Father—and of the framers of the Decree—between these two terms, "daily" and "frequent," in their practical application? To this question the answer is, beyond all reasonable doubt, that daily Communion is recommended *per se*, as the more normal practice for all of those faithful who have this priceless boon within reach. Frequent

—as distinct from daily—Communion is recommended to those who, by reason of their occupations, of their distance from church or chapel, or other such like obstacles, the daily reception of the Sacrament is not possible; and to those also—too many, alas!—who cannot be persuaded to avail themselves of their birthright as Christians in all its fulness.” *

II. Daily Communion is, in many cases, necessary for keeping the young in the grace and friendship of God.

But some one may object: May not one very fervent Communion produce as much fruit as several less fervent ones? Undoubtedly the benefit of Communion will vary according as the dispositions of the communicant are better or less good; the Decree says as much. In this sense, then, one Communion made by A. may be more fruitful than two made by B.; or, again, A. himself may obtain more fruit on one day than on another. But if the practice of frequent Communion be considered on the whole, and compared with that of rare Communion, we may reply, with Cardinal Gennari: “The thesis that rare Com-

* “The Sacrament of Divine Condescension” a paper read at the Westminster Eucharistic Congress, 1908, by the Rev. H. Lucas, S.J., Report (Sands & Co.), p. 233.

munion bears more fruit than frequent or daily Communion is flatly to be denied. To grant it would be tantamount to maintaining that the Sacrament of the Eucharist does not work its effect *ex opere operato*, that it is not "the antidote whereby we are cleansed from daily sins" and that Jesus Christ wishes to be but seldom united to our souls." *

But from the fact that A.'s one Communion equals two of B.'s in fruitfulness, we cannot argue that A. should communicate less often than B. in order to derive greater benefit! For the following propositions still remain unshaken.

1. Every Catholic in the state of grace is exhorted to communicate every day. That is his normal spiritual diet. For bodily health it is better to take food daily rather than every other day.

2. If on some days Communion profits less, its *frequency* is never the right explanation. If it were, we should have to condemn "the desire of Jesus Christ," declared to us by His Vicar.

3. Communion to-day—as indeed more than one Saint tells us—is the best preparation for Communion to-morrow, both on

* "Concerning Frequent Communion"—a theological conference, Abbey of Maredsous, 1904, p. 25.

account of the increase of sanctifying grace, which it causes and the acts of virtue which it prompts.

4. Daily Communion, even though received with imperfect dispositions—(the two *necessary* ones being always presupposed)—at least secures the chief fruit, which is preservation of the life of grace, or state of grace.

Hence the wise inference drawn by the Decree: “. . . it is plain that by the frequent and daily reception of the Holy Eucharist union with Christ is fostered, the spiritual life more abundantly sustained, the soul more richly endowed with virtues, and an even surer pledge of everlasting happiness bestowed on the recipient. . . .” *

Consequently for a given person, “it is always better to receive Communion every day, if at the time the state of grace be coupled with a right intention.” Thus, it is the system of *daily* Communion that should be applied to the young from the very outset, without interposing preliminary stages. Perhaps, they themselves may propose these stages. If so, they may be met by the following reasonings:

* Père Barbe, S.J., “Daily Communion” (Reims, *Action Populaire*), where this proposition is proved up to the hilt.

1. There is *no defence* for such a plan. The Church does not require it. In temporal concerns you would not thus forfeit immediate and certain gain.

2. It is *a temptation and a delusion*. The Devil merely seeks to keep you away from the Holy Table. He wishes to cut down your use of the Bread of Life as far as he can, for he cunningly reckons that you are not likely to increase your diet later on in life. Indeed, once a definite aim is admitted as desirable, all proposals to go to work "by degrees" are usually subterfuges prompted by sloth or cowardice, and generally end in the goal never being reached at all.

3. It is *a danger*—more particularly if Holy Communion should be specially needed by you for keeping out of sin. You must take the full, normal dose, or the cure will be delayed, and perhaps even endangered. For you will gradually lose your relish for a remedy which you find insufficient

We must be on our guard, then, against the tactics of Satan who will use all manner of artifices to hinder Holy Communion.*

In the above connection a very specious objection is sometimes put forward: "May not cases be found in which falls into mortal

* Imitation of Christ, IV, x, 1.

sin still continue in spite of daily Communion?"

In this matter two points must be held intact: the promises attached by our Lord and His Church to Communion: "This is the bread which came down from heaven that if any man eat of it he may not die," * "the antidote by which we are cleansed from venial sins and preserved from mortal ones." † Also, the numberless evidences of experience. The young themselves and their confessors can bear united witness to the wonder wrought by the Eucharist. So, if exceptions occur, we should, of course, look for the explanation, but not call in doubt established truths.

These truths being presupposed, the following answers suggest themselves:

1. If *literal daily Communion* be maintained on the proper conditions for several weeks, there will always be a notable decrease in the number and gravity of mortal sins. Indeed, it cannot be otherwise. No instance, if *carefully watched*, will falsify this assertion.

2. If Communion be *intermittent*, there is ample cause for fear. With a *recidivus*, there may be a number of relapses between two Communions made at intervals. Where-

* St. John VI., 50.

† Council of Trent.

as he was beginning to make some progress, he is dragged back to the starting point and it is a question of beginning all over again. If confessors only realised this more clearly they would exert themselves more to prevent gaps in Communion—even a gap of one single day.

3. *Daily Communion does not cancel the office of spiritual director.** Under the ordinary dispensation of Providence his advice will often be needed in order to save his clients from many faults. Such points as the manner of resisting temptation, temperance in food and drink, the occasions of sin incidental to their surroundings, day-dreaming, the tendencies of their particular character or temperament, etc. . . . , all these call for the director's watchfulness. Should counsel be withheld and the child left to himself, there are many rocks upon which his inexperience and weakness may wreck him.

Let us not be discouraged. A child, yet innocent, who follows the *régime* of daily Communion, has every assurance of escaping grievous sin and of removing its danger further and further from him. Another child, similarly treated after more or less frequent falls, will be cured sooner or later,

* See "A Difficulty," p. 444.

according to the length of time the habit has existed and the difficulties which beset him. Still there is sure to be improvement and this will prepare the way for a final cure.

Let priests take their cue from the condescension of our Lord in thus making Himself our Divine Physician: "We read in the lives of the Saints of instances in which, with a boldness which shocks our hypersensitive age, they have, when tending the sick, put their lips to an ulcer to suck away the festering corruption that could be drawn off by no other available means. Marvellous examples, truly, of a divinely inspired condescension. And is the condescension of our Lord less—or rather, immeasurably greater than that of His creature? . . . "But however foul the sickness, short of death, so long as life is left, so long as there still survives the desire to preserve this life of sanctifying grace, the Divine Physician is at hand ready, nay eagerly desirous, to come to our relief. Shall we tell the sick man that he must first make some progress towards recovery, that he must at least get rid of his more unsightly sores, before he may venture to call in the all-merciful Healer of Souls? Or that he is so very sick that a daily visit from the Physician is not to be thought of? Is it

not precisely in the most critical cases that the doctor makes a point of on no account omitting his daily visit?"*

In other words, it seems almost an outrage upon this Most Holy Sacrament that it should be used as a drug wherewith to heal our loathsome spiritual maladies. And we should certainly never dare so to use it but for that lightning flash with which Pius X. has dispelled the darkness of Jansenistic rigorism, where he tells us that the desire of Jesus Christ in giving us the Eucharist was not mainly to protect "the honour and reverence due to our Lord," but to remedy our spiritual ills. As in the whole scheme of His lowly Incarnation, humiliating Passion, and ignominious death, so in the lasting "memorial," and mystical repetition, of all three, He thinks not of Himself, but of our miserable needs.

III. EUCHARISTIC TRAINING.

This training comprises two elements: Instruction and Cultivation of Piety.

A. Instruction.

Catechisms, Exhortations and Private Direction are all means for imbuing children

* Paper of the Rev. H. Lucas, above quoted, Congress Report, pp. 230-31.

with the teaching of the Decree and dispelling all doubt and indecision.

But by far the most efficacious means is the preaching of an annual *Eucharistic Triduum*—a practice which stands recommended both by the Holy See and by actual experience. Wherever this method is adopted the movement towards the Holy Table rests upon its right basis—namely, clear and firm convictions. There, too, the true liberty of children is better ensured than elsewhere, because they are freed from false notions and from the slavery of human respect.

But whether the plan adopted be a triduum, or instructions spread over a period of time, two things are indispensable for success. The first is an uncompromising assertion of the principles laid down in the Decree as regards the *conditions sufficing* for a fruitful Communion, and for preparing the way to fervent Communions by means of ones that are at first less perfect. The next point is to insist strongly upon the importance of *uninterrupted* faithfulness to daily Communion strictly so called. The want of attention to these two points will explain failures in securing results proportionate to efforts made.

As Père Tesnière observes, a child must be penetrated with the truth that Communion

is the first necessity of its life . . . that it is the keystone to the arch of the supernatural life; so that, if it gets loosened, prayer, faithfulness to duty, hatred of sin, and love of virtue will all become relaxed: consequently, that he must cling to Communion as the most important of spiritual duties, approach the Holy Table as frequently as possible, and get back to it promptly, if abandoned—in the present, or later on—at all periods of life, and under all circumstances.

Until we have succeeded in persuading a child that the Eucharistic Food is as necessary for its soul as material bread is for its body, we shall not have instilled a practical faith in Holy Communion.*

B. Cultivation of Piety.

Attention has deservedly been called to the fact that, among the motives for Communion suggested to the faithful by the Decree, no mention is made of the *spiritual comforts*, or consolations, to be derived from the practice. Nevertheless these comforts and consolations, this relish for Communion, is certainly one of its fruits. We return

* Abundant matter for Instruction in daily Communion may be found in "The Eucharistic Triduum," Washbourne & Co.

the more readily to a Banquet which we have enjoyed. The increase of love for God—produced by the Holy Eucharist—disposes the soul to experience that sweetness in the service of God which the Holy Ghost imparts to those who place themselves under His influence.

Thus we may count upon perceiving a greater piety and taste for divine things developing in the hearts of constant communicants.

Fortunate, indeed, are the children trained to piety even from the period of preparation for First Communion—a time when young souls are specially open to such impressions. Happy, too, those growing youths and maidens who have a zealous priest to teach them, as much by example as by word, that the Eucharist is a Living Person and that love of our Lord is no mere phrase.

Here we may mention three means specially calculated to foster solid piety in young communicants. Visits to the Blessed Sacrament; devotion to the Sacred Heart of our Lord, and little acts of self-denial.

I. *The Visit.* In the greater number of educational establishments there is generally a chapel with the Blessed Sacrament reserved, and, as a rule, a public visit to the same at some hour of the day, apart from

the time of Mass. It is not uncommon now to leave the students free at certain times in the day to make a few minutes' Visit if they choose to do so, quite of themselves and without any kind of pressure being exerted. The superiority of such perfectly voluntary Visits over organised or supervised ones is unquestionable. It is more effective as a connecting link between one Communion and the next, its influence upon the habits of the young will be more likely to last afterwards when there will be no bells or signals to remind them of religious practices, and when daily surroundings may be anything but conducive to piety.

The Visit may also serve to confirm the effects of a reprimand or of advice, or for giving consolation in some sorrow.

In the hands of authorities, the suggestion to make a Visit might sometimes come in usefully upon occasions when reproof has to be administered for unsatisfactory conduct, or counsel offered upon some more important matter, or some bad news broken.

2. *Devotion to the Sacred Heart.* Even historically speaking, there is an intimate connection between frequent Communion and devotion to the Adorable Heart of our Lord. Jansenism came and inspired a false

fear in souls, keeping them aloof from sacramental union with Christ. But devotion to the Sacred Heart sprang up in the Church and restored confidence by representing the great love that burnt in the heart of Jesus for mankind and His desire to unite Himself to them. Thenceforward the tide turned, however gradually and imperceptibly, towards the Holy Table. As a spiritual writer well puts it—if we want to have true love of the Sacred Heart we must first convince ourselves of how much that Heart loves *us*. Similarly, if we are to succeed in developing in the hearts of the young a strong love of receiving our Lord in Holy Communion, we must endeavour to convince them of the ardent love, and desire for them; which the Sacred Heart manifests in the Sacrament of His Love. Then frequent and daily Communion will cease to be merely one out of a number of devout customs which they are supposed to adopt during their school days. The practice will be firmly founded upon motives of love, and have the best chance of lasting, or at least of reviving, should it happen to be dropped for a period; owing to evil influences.

“I have a thirst to be loved by men in the Sacrament of my love” * is the master-

* Life of Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque.

thought that we should seek to imprint deeply in their minds.

It is a good thing to accustom the young to various practices of the Devotion in question: e.g., Acts of Love, Thanksgiving, Reparation; observance of the "First Fridays" in honour of the Sacred Heart, membership with the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart or with the Apostleship of prayer; the outward use of the Sacred Heart Badge at Communion. Let us not forget the ample promises made to this Devotion.

3. *Acts of self-denial.* Love of our Lord should show itself in deeds. A child should be taught to give up whatever displeases Him and disputes with Him the possession of its heart. Why not teach the children to direct towards the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus those numerous little victories over self which school life entails? There could be no better form of preparation or of thanksgiving for Holy Communion than greater generosity in carrying out the wishes and directions of authorities, regarded by those who have the Christian spirit as a sign of God's Will and the price of many graces. Communicants trained in this way will make rapid progress in virtue and in the love of Christ. The Eucharist will soon become the very centre of their school-

life and plant in their hearts the seeds of an after life of prayer, self-sacrifice and charity towards their neighbour.

If one were asked to place one's finger upon the weak spot in our Catholic youth of to-day, would it not be the selfish love of pleasure and excitement? Parents not uncommonly complain now-a-days that their sons and daughters look upon them simply as purveyors of amusements and nice things without giving a thought to the expense or inconvenience involved. Whatever else goes by the board, *they* must have "a good time." If the round of pleasure be not continuous and varied, discontent and grumbling become the order of the day. So that this element in the cultivation of piety and virtue of which we have been speaking not only favours the practice of daily Communion, but should be regarded by parents as an important factor in domestic peace and happiness. Communion and self-denial mutually react upon each other. Communion strengthens the soul in self-sacrifice, and self-denial feeds Eucharistic piety.

COMMUNION, SELF-DENIAL, AND SOCIAL WORK.

Active participation in social work is one of the chief Catholic needs of our time. The social worker should be pre-

pared at school by enlisting the practical interest of the young in good works and encouraging them to give what support they can to them. The immense importance of Catholic social work for the protection and extension of our Faith should be duly brought home to such of our scholars as are nearing their entry upon life. The forms of social work are legion, but this is not the place to discuss them in detail. It is their relation to frequent and daily Communion that here concerns us.

One thing stands out clearly: Social Work and a selfish, pleasure-seeking life are things incompatible. The number of those, who, upon finishing their education, will have unlimited leisure for devoting to the good of others and furthering the Catholic cause, is comparatively small. As regards the greater number, social work will spell the sacrifice of time and energy upon which considerable demands have already been made by a person's ordinary, daily business or work. Social work, therefore, means self-denial. Hence, continual recourse to Holy Communion, as the Great Feeder of self-sacrifice, becomes the very soul of such work. It is, besides, the never-failing source both of *efficiency* and of *safety* to the worker. Of efficiency—because for success in this

kind of work—especially in certain forms of it—the influence of a truly Christian example is a first requisite. Of safety—because there is no small risk, with many natures, in continually giving out to other souls, unless all the time we are constantly repairing the wastage of spiritual vitality by means of the Bread of Life. Otherwise, while gaining others we may lose ourselves; while conquering for Christ we may ourselves be overcome.

It is much to be regretted that advocates of social work on this side of the Channel, at least, seem to have forgotten that they are building upon sand if frequent Communion be not considered as *the very foundation* of the social movement.

4. *Preparation and Thanksgiving.* The principles, and certain practical hints connected with this matter, will be found set forth in Père Lintelo's "Eucharistic Triduum." *

It will be enough here to touch upon certain points mentioned by the aforesaid author, and deserving the attention of educators and priests.

According to Catholic doctrine, once more confirmed by the papal Decree, the effect of the Sacrament is *infallibly* secured

* Pp. 79-84.

by the fact of the communicant being in the state of grace. Whence it follows that it is always a serious loss to omit a Communion on the ground that *more perfect* dispositions are lacking. Père De Smedt, S.J., in his work upon "Our Supernatural Life," solves what may be called two "test cases," which throw a powerful light on the above principle: "(a) take the case of a person who is so infirm or dull-headed in the early morning as to be incapable of praying either before or after Holy Communion. He ought not, on this account to abstain from It, and so lose the fruit of the Sacrament. (b) venial sin, even if committed with the fullest deliberation in the very act of receiving the Sacred Host, does not prevent fruit from being derived."

Of course, actual fervour *increases* the benefit received from Communion. But care must be taken not to view in the light of an obligation what is simply a matter of counsel. It is a very common error to confound true and solid devotion with *sensible* devotion, and to appraise the value of a Communion according to the ease with which the communicant concentrates his, or her, faculties, and the delight experienced in praying.

A few years ago a letter revealing this

false valuation appeared in the correspondence columns of "The Tablet." The writer expressed a scandalised surprise at what she had witnessed in one of our churches on Maundy Thursday—namely, altar boys receiving Holy Communion although their preoccupation with the unusual ceremonies, both before and after reception, made all "communing" with our Lord a practical impossibility. This devout colloquy appeared to the correspondent quite essential to a due reception of Communion. To people thus inclined to attach undue weight to the *subjective* aspect of Communion, and to undervalue Its *objective worth*, the following remarks from a spiritual writer, previously quoted, may prove instructive.

"Many pious souls see no other advantage in Communion except the honour and benefit of having the Adorable Person of our Lord Jesus Christ really within them for the space of some minutes. . . of being able to converse familiarly with Him, to express their love of Him and receive assurance of His love for them. . . . Consequently, if they happen to be distracted, dry, and unfeeling after Communion, they imagine their Communions to be unprofitable, and perhaps even blameworthy and displeasing to God; and they are tempted to

leave them off, or at least to limit their frequency. This is a big mistake. Doubtless our Lord's presence within us is a great favour, a condescension on His part, and a marvellous proof of His infinite love for us; doubtless it is most proper that we should strive to show Him all the reverence and love that He has a right to claim from us, and to beg Him to bestow upon us the treasures of His bounty with a lavish hand. At the same time we must ever remember that the presence of the Divine Saviour within us, and the transient union of His Body with our own, admirable proof as it is of His Love for us, is—after all—but the *sign* of that permanent union of His divinity with our souls and that *this* constitutes the *Fruit* of the Sacrament and the purpose of its institution. Now this fruit is obtained infallibly, be the dispositions of the communicant what they may, *provided* these dispositions do not place him in a state of mortal sin. It is *this* fruit that we must most value and seek first and foremost in Holy Communion.*

Very perfect dispositions for Communion are not usually to be found in many young people, either owing to lack of

* De Smedt, S.J., "Notre Vie Surnaturelle," Part I., pp. 91-93.

practice, or to the weaknesses and struggles incidental to their age. But it would surely be bad doctoring, when dealing with a sick person, to deny him the one remedy for his complaint except on the condition of his performing acts which presuppose perfect health.*

5. Concerning the manner of occupying themselves before or after Holy Communion, children should be made to understand the following:

(a) Any sort of prayer or pious reflection can be made to serve the purpose.

(b) There are no prescribed forms of prayer for Preparation and Thanksgiving; if definite forms of prayer are employed, it is good to vary them from time to time.

(c) The *best* of all methods is undoubtedly to unite oneself with the Sacrifice of the Mass. In the case of servers at Mass this would even seem the only practical method for combining *due attention to the ceremonies* with devotion suited to Communion Servers receiving Communion immediately before the priest begins Mass should be taught that it will do their Communion no harm to attend carefully to answering the priest at the beginning of the Mass. They might fancy that, so soon after receiving our Lord,

* Cros.

they ought rather to be conversing directly with Him or reading the prayers for after Communion out of their prayer book. Here, again, the *objective* value of Communion—mentioned above should be borne in mind.

6. With the children in our elementary schools, some priests have adopted the plan of public devotions during the Communion Mass. The use of hymns may be useful by way of holding the attention of the little ones. This method has already been suggested in an earlier chapter for a Saturday Communion Mass.

7. *Prayer Books for Communion.* The need of Devotions for Communion written expressly for children or young people is perhaps less imperative than some seem to suppose—that is to say, under the views expressed above upon the subject of Preparation and Thanksgiving. Given the need of such specializing manuals, it is one not yet adequately supplied in English.

IV. PERSEVERANCE.

1. *At School.* Let us count up the enemies of Frequent Communion: The Devil, the natural inconstancy of the young, human respect; surroundings or companionships, false notions, the missing of Communions;

the passions, falls into mortal sin; external obstacles—such as distance from a church, forced or voluntary interruptions to the practice, which tend to repeat themselves, lack of unanimity of views among confessors, masters or mistresses, etc.

The power exerted over certain characters by these different hindrances can hardly be exaggerated. Hence we must never tire in the pursuit of the Holy Father's object. The changeableness of the young puts them in constant need of a stimulus. And, as Lambert observes, it is the visible, human stimulus that they need most. Who can that be but the priest, whom God has appointed to guide souls? If he fail them, no wonder that the zeal for Communion originally excited should cool and die out. It is not one priest here and there that is wanted, but many priests anxious for the spiritual progress of their charges, never weary of reminding them of the "salutary practice," and providing them with every facility and opportunity for carrying it out.

There is, perhaps nothing more essential for maintaining frequent Communion than assiduity and regularity in attending the confessional in the morning, before, and if there be more than one priest, also during the Masses.

N.B. This, of course, applies equally to the frequent and daily Communion of the adult faithful in our churches and chapels. Without this, it cannot be said that we are *promoting* the papal desires, and the faithful will hardly fail to notice the discrepancy between our exhortations to the "salutary practice" and our want of self-sacrifice in supplying them with opportunities for following it. The only means of evading such a comparison would be to omit the exhortations—and so neglect the injunction of Pius X. contained in Article VI of the Decree, and that would be even worse.*

Priestly zeal, therefore, is a necessary condition for the continuance, as well as for the inauguration of Frequent and Daily Communion. "So true is this," writes Père Lintelo, "that where this practice is held in honour you may be sure of finding an apostle watching over it; and where it is regarded in the light of an utopia, or at all events as an exceptional thing, there the priests have need to examine their consciences."

* Lest the Decree—in its provisions for spreading the practice—should be mistaken for a mere pious suggestion submitted to our consideration, it would be well to recall what has been pointed out concerning the *force* of the Decree on Daily Communion.

In spite of ourselves, the fear may arise that these young daily communicants will abandon the practice in the near future. That is no reason for relaxing our energies, but rather an additional one for increasing our efforts to secure so great a blessing to them while we may. As Pius X. told the Bishop of Belley (April 21, 1909): "Granting that they will not always persevere, these frequent Communions deposit in their hearts a seed that will not finally perish."

2. *After leaving School.* Even at school many enemies conspire against Frequent Communion. But what when a youth is left to his own devices, and goes either to the University, or to technical studies in commerce, in industrial pursuits, or for the Army or Navy? And yet, why *should* he be "left to his own devices?" The secret of perseverance lies mainly in having a fixed confessor to whom the young person will give an account of himself (or herself) from time to time. But unless this custom has been adopted at school, there is little hope of its being taken up afterwards.

His Eminence, Cardinal Mercier, Primate of Belgium, addressed the following words to University Students, Dec. 8, 1907, "If you wish, my dear young friends, to preserve your faith and strengthen it, to keep chaste,

strong, unselfish, and to experience the impulses of a generous enthusiasm, approach Communion with frequency, and even daily."

Counsels like these are applicable to the youth of both sexes and of every nationality; and the aid of association will prove invaluable for giving effect to them. No doubt, our ordinary Sodalties, Guilds of Children of Mary, and the like, will—in the hands of zealous Directors and Chaplains—serve for gathering in those who have left school and help to maintain them, as far as changed circumstances permit, in their former eucharistic fervour. At least, they will do this provided the usual Guild rule of the "Monthly Communion" be not proposed as if it were the *limit* of what is desirable, instead of being the *minimum* that is tolerable in an associate. Unfortunately, there exists in England—as far as the writer is aware—no *lay* association having the one, distinctive object of spreading frequent and daily Communion. But we have the "Archconfraternity of the Blessed Sacrament"—to which the sub-title of "People's Eucharistic League" has been appended.*

For securing this end, nothing, perhaps,

* See "Manual of the Archconfraternity of the Blessed Sacrament and People's Eucharistic League," printed at the Orphans' Press, Rochdale.

is more essential than uniformity of mind and action among priests, based upon the teaching of the Decree. Given this condition, the transfer of young people from the spiritual charge of their educators to that of other priests or chaplains will have no prejudicial effect upon their eucharistic habits. Our constant prayer should be that, on this point at least, all ministers of the Holy Eucharist may "be of the same mind," and "continue in the same rule." *

3. *Advice to departing scholars.* Counsels as to the practice of Communion should be given to those leaving school and these should be of a practical kind. While never lowering the true ideal set before by the Decree—namely, *daily* Communion, we must take into account the obstacles and impediments to be faced by the particular youth or maiden. To some we may reasonably recommend daily Mass and Communion. There are comparatively few to whom Communion every Sunday would be really impossible, given a little good will and self-denial. Where more cannot be expected, let us urge this weekly Communion strongly, but pointing out that it does not necessarily entail weekly *Confession*. This is important, since, in England, at least, Saturday after-

* Phil. III., 16.

noon is—for those busily engaged during the week—one of the few opportunities for recreation. Advice involving its *continual* loss would seldom be carried out.

Owing to exceptional circumstances, perhaps even a monthly Communion might mean no small measure of inconvenience. The principle to contend for in all cases is the importance of never missing a Communion—whether on Sundays, or weekdays—without a really good reason. We need have little anxiety for anyone who adheres to this rule with substantial fidelity.

It is profitable to discuss with one who is finishing his or her earlier education the particular hindrances that lie ahead, and to arrive at some definite plan of campaign regarding Communions. Whatever the circumstances of the case may dictate, we must remember always that the Church, in urging daily Communion upon the young, seeks not merely to provide them with a defence against the perils of their time of life, but also has in view the restoration of this practice throughout the whole of Catholic society.

It has been thought useful to add here the scheme for a pious practice, by which *young people themselves* may exercise zeal

for spreading around them the use of frequent and daily Communion.

APOSTOLATE OF DAILY COMMUNION

AT SCHOOL AND AFTER

Those in charge of educational establishments for the young of either sex, besides carrying out the Papal instructions as to promoting frequent and daily Communion among their charges, may extend this holy work indefinitely by making the young people themselves APOSTLES OF DAILY COMMUNION.

Motives to be proposed. 1. The pleasure done to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord by forwarding Its great desire to be united to the souls of all the faithful "the desire of Jesus Christ," as the Pope calls it. In this way they can do much to extend the kingdom of Jesus Christ in the souls of others. 2. The great privilege of being thus allowed to help Our Lord. 3. The great reward which He will give for every additional good Communion they are the means of securing and for all the good done to the receiver.

Ways of being Apostles. These may be remembered as "The Three Ps." 1. *By Practice*, i.e., by keeping faithfully to daily

Communion themselves in spite of the self-denial which this will sometimes cost them—especially *during the Holidays*. Their example will lead others to follow suit.

2. *By Prayer*. Not necessarily by saying many *extra* prayers, but, e.g., Praying for the intention whenever they say—in the “Our Father”: “Give us this day our *daily bread*”; or when the Priest says the *Pater Noster* at Holy Mass. Or again, when *genuflecting* towards the Tabernacle in church, saying: “Sacred Heart of Jesus, Thy kingdom come!” *

Those who wish to be yet more generous and zealous might say often, if not daily, the Pope’s Prayer for the spread of daily Communion: “O sweet Jesus, Who didst come into the world,” etc. † Or, an occasional *Short Visit* to Our Lord “in the loneliness and silence of the Tabernacle,” ‡ when passing a church or chapel. Or, making some *outward* sign of reverence when passing by a church where the Blessed Sacrament is

* 300 days’ Indulgence each time: Pius X., May 4, 1906.

† Obtainable at “Messenger Office,” Dublin, or Wimbledon (England).

‡ Address of Pius X. to French First Communicant Pilgrims, in the Sistine Chapel, Low Sunday, 1912, in which this practice of often visiting the Blessed Sacrament was recommended to the children.

kept *, e.g., a slight inclination of the head, or uncovering the head (for males). Or, a "Spiritual Communion" from time to time during the day, e.g., "Jesus, I desire to receive Thee."

3. *By Persuasion* — sweetly persuading others to go to Communion daily, or frequently, or at least oftener than hitherto. Using the same amount of sweet persuasion with their parents or others, to secure their *own* Communions during the time of their holidays (when difficulties are made, perhaps, about their going out fasting to church) as they successfully employ for obtaining some special "treat" or amusement.

It has been found by experience that boys as well as girls can be very keen in employing the above means for making themselves useful to Our Lord.

* Indulgence of 100 days for this act: Pius X., June 28, 1908.

CHAPTER VII

COMMUNION AND THE CRISIS OF YOUTH

IT has been observed, and apparently with reason, that the number of exemplary Catholics of middle age does not correspond with the number of Catholics who have had the benefit of a thoroughly religious education. When we consider the number of boys and girls who pass through our Catholic schools and institutions, two questions suggest themselves: "Where have they all got to?—and again: "How many of those whom we can trace are doing real credit to their Catholic training?" Many reasons may account for the disappearance, but one single reason explains the poor results in the case of so many former Catholic scholars: they have caught the spirit of the world and fallen away from the high principles instilled into them during the time of their education.

The heats of passion in one or other of its forms, too often in the sensual form, have dried up the fountains of grace, or

else the frost of unbelief has nipped the flowers of fair promise and destroyed the fruit, oftener, than not, perhaps, the heats have begun the work and the frost has finished it. These are the dead failures. But short of absolute failure, we have too many half-and-half Catholics of whom it would be difficult to say whether they are for Christ or for this world.

Such facts have in recent years stimulated the minds and pens of earnest persons, and set them upon an examination of the means for securing a more prosperous spiritual future for our Catholic youth. The problem these writers have so sought to solve is: How can our young people be better protected from the deadly assaults of vice and irreligion? Several continental magazines have dealt with the "crisis" that occurs in the lives of young men and young women as regards faith and morals.

Many excellent counsels and suggestions are to be found in these publications. "Be enthusiastic for your faith. Stand up for your Faith. Be chaste yourselves and insist upon others respecting your virtue." No one would wish to alter a single word of such advice, only, a chapter on frequent and daily Communion would appear to be an indispensable addition. At every page

the momentous question forces itself upon the reader: "Yes! But how is it to be done? Where are young people to obtain that invincible courage which rises superior to all difficulties?" Every page should have writ large and bold upon it the answer:

"Approach the Holy Table! Receive the Heavenly Bread which nerved the martyrs to shed their blood, and which will nerve you also, to gain the crown of a bloodless martyrdom.*

Not that use of the Sacraments is wholly passed over by the writers just mentioned. But they fail to give it the prominent place which belongs to it in the economy of the spiritual life. Communion is commended as an "excellent form of piety," "the highest expression of our faith," "a sublimely symbolical act of worship" etc. As if it were not far more than all this—a vital act, the normal daily support of the soul in the state of grace, and the surest safeguard of our virtue and our faith!

It is rather on these points that the said writers should chiefly have insisted. The Catholic Church shows herself a divinely guided mother precisely in this—that she urges children and young people (though

* See words of St. Cyprian, in the Foreword, p. 6.

not these only) to receive the Holy Eucharist every day of their lives, if possible.

We have no need to justify her word of command requiring her ministers to propagate daily Communion. Yet it will be profitable to point out how Holy Communion surpasses in efficacy all those other remedies which people prescribe, or rather to show that the Eucharist contains in itself in a pre-eminent degree the virtue of these other prescriptions. It is capable of taking their place, while, without It, other remedies become mere palliatives. They may relieve local symptoms, temporarily, but they leave untouched the root of the disease.

The superiority of Holy Communion may be shown in regard to both the forms of the youthful "crisis" i.e., in *morals* and in *faith*.

I. THE MORAL CRISIS.

It is hardly rash to say that comparatively few young people escape the snares of sensual passion entirely. How many there are who reach the married state only after falling into passionate irregularities. Hence thoughtful educators, alarmed at the dangers run by innocent young people amid a society that is fast becoming more materialistic and pagan, have looked about for some

way of at least checking the ravages of vice. They find themselves face to face with the problem—now-a-days more than ever thorny—that of *Education in Purity*. Nor has this anxiety for the moral preservation of the young been confined to Catholic educators. Headmasters of non-Catholic public schools in England, and those charged with the training of girls, have given their suggestions for solving the harassing problem.

“*Education in Purity.*” It is a somewhat unusual title, and it embodies views that are equally unusual. There is need, so runs the theory—to train the child to the practice of purity—by the methods hitherto employed, no doubt, but also by one which has hitherto been too much overlooked, that is to say, by gradually initiating the growing youth into the secrets of the relation between the sexes. This initiation will, of course, be effected with all seriousness and discretion; it must be adapted to the requirements of the individual and of surroundings, it must lift the veil by degrees only; but all the same, it is indispensable. In this matter, as in others, a child needs to be enlightened and guided. An educator practically resigns his functions once he evades questions prompted by an awakened

spirit of inquiry. It is to the father or mother that the duty of such instruction will principally fall.

A two-fold advantage will result. The child will learn to approach the mystery of the propagation of life with due reverence; fatherhood will be represented to him, not from the standpoint which associates it with the functions of the animal, but rather as a sharing by the creature in the work of the Creator. On the other hand, he will not be exposed to having his eyes opened and his mind disturbed by revelations from corrupt companions, and his confidence in those who have instructed him will remain unshaken.

Such is the theory as expounded by Catholic writers. It has been sharply attacked by others.* The favour it has generally found in educational circles was

* The principal authors cited in its favour are: Fons-segrive: "L' education de la Pureté:—J. Renault "La Pureté. Préservation, Direction, Initiation." Padre Amado, S.J. sides with the above theorists as regards a modestly expressed instruction, but is more particular as to the choice of the right moment for it. He holds that a premature revelation would be dangerous and practically unlawful. The institution known as "L'-Œuvre de Saint Charles," at Grammont, publishes a more extreme essay maintaining the contrary view, and entitled: "Les Meurtriers Inconscients des Ames." (The Unconscious Slayers of Souls.)

due both to the excellent intentions of its advocates and to the measure of truth which it contained.

The time comes when ignorance is no longer possible.

One ought never to deceive a child who questions in good faith.

It is much better that this particular kind of enlightenment should come from pure, rather than from contaminated sources.

These propositions at least can hardly be disputed.

As to the first of them, the time when the young mind becomes partly alive to the sexual question will be earlier or later according to the rapidity of its mental and moral development, and the external conditions of the young life. But speaking generally of England it would be folly to shut one's eyes to the conditions of modern life which inevitably shorten the period of ignorance. Among these may be mentioned easier access to printed sources of information, even in the most carefully guarded homes, the freer intercourse of children with their elders and between young people of either sex, the association of youths and maidens in the same forms of physical exercise and sport, and the like; these all tend to hasten on the knowledge

of sex. Thus desire for knowledge as to this subject is stimulated. And here comes in the second proposition above stated. If we put young folk off with ridiculous inventions these will not long satisfy them. The result of such deception will be the same as if we simply "shut them up," telling them that they are too young to understand such things—namely, they will try to ferret out the truth by surreptitious means; and the quest will maintain them most undesirably in a state of morbid curiosity. Or else they may come across some precocious and unscrupulous companion who will enlighten them in terms calculated to produce a permanently soiling effect upon their minds and imaginations. Hence in accord with the third proposition it seems better they should obtain the knowledge from pure and rightly intentioned sources than from contaminated ones.

Catholic writers have not failed to urge recourse to the aids of religion for restraining the onset of nascent passions and to point out that mere initiation by itself was not enough. This qualification of their theory helped no doubt to soften its seeming boldness, and has perhaps inclined people to accept it without question.

Others experienced a shock when they saw exactly the same theory advanced, and in a cruder form, by Protestants and Rationalists. But in the writings of the latter we see two vital gaps. No account is taken either of original sin, or of divine grace. Along with a glorification of "nature," a system of morality is set up consisting of a mixture of sports, science and energy.

Too much attention to such books may have caused certain minds to lose sight of some other propositions worthy of consideration: Thought leads to action; once speculative curiosity has been satisfied practical curiosity will wish to have its turn. Though ignorance will not serve as a foundation of virtue it sometimes forms a fairly good safeguard to the same; modesty may not be the same thing as chastity, and yet it powerfully contributes to its preservation. Though it may be wrong to deceive a child, it may still be better to delay the moment for enlightening him, and on account of fresh problems that arise, such delay is unavoidable. And then, is it so certain that the child that has received enlightenment from a pure source, will not seek to supplement his knowledge which he suspects of incompleteness by unlawful means?

All these various aspects of the question

go to show how delicate is the task of solution and how difficult it is to trace the line of duty for parents and educators.*

People appear to be so far agreed as to insist in common upon the need of instruction. Yet by over insistence upon this natural remedy strength is added to the delusion that instruction is an all-sufficing preservative of youthful virtue. Experience proves how feeble is this barrier for resisting the onslaught of the passions. It must be propped up by the avoidance of occasions of sin and by the action of Sacraments. Dr. Surbled and M. J. Renault have had the courage to name clearly the great remedy of all: the young person *must receive Communion frequently*.

Yes! there it is. In the Eucharist lies *the secret of chastity*. The words of the Church in her liturgy warrant this assertion: she calls the Eucharist "unicum et salutare remedium" (the only saving remedy) what wonder that the immaculate body of Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, should possess an all-powerful virtue for cleansing our own fallen body and raising it above its lower tendencies!

* Père Lintelo thinks that this task has been best accomplished by P. Castillon, S.J. in the "Etudes," 1909, vol. II, p. 825 sq.

The Eucharist prevents the death of souls; the Gospel promise, on this point, is most explicit. It may be regarded as exceptionally effective with the souls of children—so fair and so loved of Our Lord. Bring them to Him constantly during that dread crisis, and they will not fall. But the pity is that people do not realise that the infallibility of the said promise is attached to the *normal use* of Communion, that is, Communion received daily,* and that for the prescription to take full effect, it must be administered in the proper quantity.† For this reason, the Sovereign Pontiff—three times in one year—bade us priests urge children to communicate every day.

But, to press the matter home—those weapons offered to the young Christian soldier by educators unconsciously tinged with naturalism—what do they amount to? They may be summed up as development of natural energy. Yet we should know by experience, even did not faith teach it us,

* That is to say, as frequent Communion as is possible to the individual. Where opportunities for Communion are scarce, fidelity in the use of other spiritual means will doubtless draw down what supplementary graces are needed for the soul's safety.

† "The use of Sacraments, in the measure strictly enjoined, is inefficacious for reforming conduct." Ph. Ponsard: *Revue Prat. Apolog.*, Vol. II, 1906, p. 70.

that some stronger aid is needed for resisting violent temptations. It is not that natural helps are to be despised, or that they are altogether valueless. Will-power is not superseded by grace; it acts as a support in the fight and grace comes to crown it with victory. But without this higher reinforcement, victory of the will over the seductions of pleasure would only be possible to a small number of privileged individuals placed in favourable conditions.

On the contrary let the young Catholic but "multiply his supernatural forces by ten, and he will have increased his natural worth a hundred fold." *

His position is as follows. The supernatural life of the soul though distinguishable from, the natural, is not a separate thing. Baptism has planted in his soul aspirations of a nobler sort than those of fallen human nature, and established springs of activity belonging to the divine order of things. The present need is to preserve grace in the soul, that is, to preserve life—and to set its latent supernatural energies, in motion. Now this is the special function of the Bread of Life. As Saint Thomas explains, the Sacrament of the Eucharist is the perfection of the other Sacraments inasmuch as its office is to

* Abbé Coubé, " Les Chevaliers du Sacré Coeur.

quicken the activity of the graces derived from them.

How well did early Christianity understand this vivifying power of the Eucharist! They believed firmly in those words of Jesus: "I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven if any man eat of it he may not die. . . . Except you eat . . . you shall not have life in you." We find the Fathers of the Church repeating the caution: Take care lest by failing to receive daily you expose yourselves to death. Death may, indeed, be delayed by fortunate circumstances. But scanty nourishment leads unerringly to the successive stages of spiritual anemia, deterioration, and death.

Taking its stand upon the Gospel, the Council of Trent has defined Communion as the preservative of the soul from mortal sin. This must be understood of Communion received according to the mind of Him who instituted it—that is to say, when taken as our daily nourishment—always excepting hindrances that do not spring from indifference to the Heavenly Food.

Truly the struggle of youth against the flesh is a severe one. And yet we are bound to admit that God lays impossible burdens on no man, and that unless we deliberately interfere with Our Lord's work in our regard,

the aids he supplies *must* be sufficient for repelling all temptations that may assail us. It is we who are to blame for undervaluing the matchless resources placed at our disposal. Hitherto we priests have doled out the Bread of Sons too grudgingly to the young. Can we be astonished if—as a consequence—animal passions get the upper hand with generations of Catholics reared upon such starvation diet?

We must, on the contrary increase the number of "Children of the Holy Table"—as Leo XIII loved to call them, and then we shall have multiplied the number of *normal* children, in the Christian sense. For such, the crisis of the senses will be long deferred, and when it does come, will be safely weathered. There is not an earnest promoter of Communion for the young who could not cite many surprising instances of scholars raised, after a certain period of unremitting Communion, to a high degree in delicacy of conscience and in the avoidance of everything that seemed displeasing to God. What nobler work could priests, educators, and parents set their hands to than the raising up of a pure and staunch race of Catholics as a glorious trophy of the Eucharistic triumphs of the Sacred Heart.

II. THE RELIGIOUS CRISIS.

Between life at school and life in the world considerable leakage often occurs. Among young men and women of to-day there are far too many "indifferents;" and the indifferents of to-day are too commonly the renegades of to-morrow. It would be easy enough—though too great a simplification—to attribute the phenomenon to one single source: the dawn of the passions. It might be at once replied: "The passions will never prevail over a good will strengthened by Holy Communion, by intelligent, pains-taking guidance, and by the graces flowing from a fervent and free performance of religious exercises." *

Irreligious surroundings account, no doubt, for some defections; and yet one sees young people unaffected by such noxious environment. One even finds thorough-going Catholics issue from such surroundings. Environment, therefore, does not always, nor necessarily, prove fatal.

Yet it is true—as Pius X. told the faithful of Rome—that the very atmosphere of the world is charged with anti-christian thought and practical atheism. The child that has

* *Décadence du Catholicisme en France.* P. de Bovis. p. 199.

no stronger support for its faith than its mother's teaching (and, in these days of pleasure-hunting, gad-about mothers, not so much of that either), or who depends entirely upon an early religious education at school but carelessly followed, runs no small risk of going under. Then he enters upon higher studies, and finds himself confronted with the alleged conflict between the truths of faith and so-called "facts" of science. In addition, those round about the youth are harping upon the "inevitable crisis of faith which young people of our day must experience," and thus they provoke one by suggestion.

Our English youth have their religious dangers to face. Though perhaps not identical with those chiefly present to the mind of Pius X., when uttering the words just quoted, they are nevertheless fast approaching the continental type. There is the increasing flood of rationalistic literature to beware of. Novels are no more free from snares to Catholic orthodoxy than from unclean suggestiveness. Secularism, i.e., the ousting of God and of the supernatural from every department of life is pervading public thought; right and wrong are being reduced to a question of convenience, safety, profit, momentary gratification—in a word, per-

sonal or collective well-being in *this* life. God, His rights and His sanctions beyond the grave, are no longer things to be reckoned with. So it is largely without the Catholic fold.

But even within it, dangers from ill-instructed weak-kneed, or false brethren are not absent. There are Catholics who while outwardly professing the Faith and conforming to all essential practices of religion, show an astonishing disregard for the divine authority at the back of Peter's See. The Pope has but to make a pronouncement of any sort, and they are at once ready with their criticisms and complaints. They re-echo, like parrots, all the hostile, ignorant comments of the most anti-Catholic journals and prints. And as they seldom indulge in the luxury of Catholic reading, their blunders get stereotyped in their minds, and their conversation on Church topics becomes barely distinguishable from that of non-Catholics. For a time, perhaps, such an atmosphere revolts them. It is so completely opposed to that in which their school days have been passed. The danger is that, by having dinned into their ears the flattering exhortation that "now they must begin to think for themselves," they should begin to look upon the principles instilled into

them at school as the professional cant of priests, or "Nuns' nonsense." The spirit of independence and the love of novelties, incidental to their time of life, tends to enhance the mischief. We have then all the elements of a religious crisis, unless means be at hand to ward it off.

The bearing of loyalty and submission to the Holy See upon preservation of faith seems to be forcibly illustrated in the following incident: The present worthy editor of *La Croix* tells of a deceased relative of his—another brave champion of the Church, bearing the same family name—that he once asked the unfortunate De Lammenais when it was that he ceased to say Mass. The erring priest replied that one night he was debating with himself whether or not to submit to a condemnation recently passed upon some of his writings. "I decided I would not," added De Lammenais. "The next day I went to say Mass. As soon as I reached the altar, all belief in the Blessed Sacrament left me. That Mass was a torture, and I never said Mass again."

The early formation, therefore, of firm and uncompromising Catholic *character*, through frequent and daily Communion, becomes a pressing need. Indirectly, of course, a

religious crisis may be averted, by providing against a moral one. For the crisis of faith is, in many cases, only the sequel to being overcome during the crisis of passion. "It frequently happens that when the speculative downfall begins, the practical disaster is already completed." * But the Eucharist has besides a direct bearing upon faith, tending to preserve and strengthen it.†

Theologically, there is a close connection between doctrine and grace. So that whatever intensifies grace in the soul confirms its faith in divine truths. We may try to disabuse the young of doctrinal errors with Apologetics, or reasoned defence of Christian beliefs. But the best apologetics are those of the preventive sort, just as the best medicine is that which keeps disease away. We must search for that which makes the vital support of the christian life: and that is *grace*. It is grace, received at Baptism, that forms the soul's *principle of life* and enables it to repel destructive influences; and the indispensable means for preserving grace are prayer and the Sacraments. People may ascribe falls from religion to the reading of bad books, to bad plays, love

* Revue Prat. d' Apolog.

† See *Eucharistic Triduum* Communion the preserver of faith; p. 138.

of money, weakness of character, and the rest, and no doubt they are right—in a certain measure. But these are only the proximate causes. There is a far deeper one: the lamentable *decay of the Christian spirit*; and the real question crying for an answer is: Whence does this decay come? Leo XIII. has given us the clue: “If we are saddened by the sight of dwindling enthusiasm in professing the faith and of a falling off from the old purity of morals amongst so many, *the chief cause is to be found in the fact that amongst the majority, the love and use of the Eucharistic Banquet are on the wane, and, in many cases, have entirely ceased to exist.*” * Shortly, Christian virtues are the fruit of a divine tree: “Without me you can do nothing” . . . “Abide in me and I in you” . . . “He that eateth me the same shall live by me,” † These are words of Our Lord. Without Communion there can be no true spiritual life. To Communion belongs the work of ensuring an increase of this divine life and of repairing its losses.

The following has been advanced in explanation of the weakening or loss of faith in certain cases: “The misfortune is that we are made to learn the Catechism formulas

* Brief, Jan. 10, 1900.

† St. John xv, 5; 4; vi, 58.

when we are so very young. At that age, such sublime truths make but a faint impression. Yet, afterwards people have neither the time nor the inclination to go back upon them, and thus, for the rest of their lives, they remain with the religious philosophy of a child."

Unquestionably it would be of the greatest advantage, in riper years, to make a deeper study of our faith—a thing by no means uncommon in the past, nor at the present time—especially in our secondary schools. But people fail to notice that what the child needs is something more than homeopathic doses of catechism formulas—namely, it needs to *practise* its religion; and this last will act as a preservative to the first. The mind of a child, no doubt, is little impressed by philosophic reasonings; but—by way of compensation—it possesses a clearer intuition—above all, as long as the faculty has not yet been clouded by sin. Moreover, at any age whatever, the grace of our Baptism, re-inforced in Confirmation and nourished by the Eucharist, must always remain the chief and most vital element in our attachment to the Faith. The gift and virtue of Faith is supernatural. Our Lord has not separated the *truth* from the *life*: I am . . . the truth and the life. Communion with

Jesus "the life" is also Communion with Jesus "the truth." Each reception of "Christ's Body," besides uniting our wills more closely to Him in the bonds of charity, quickens our perception of the truths of faith, and adds firmness to our profession of it.

This is what has happened. More care has been taken to store the youthful mind with religious *knowledge* than to fill the young heart with *grace*. As a consequence, that knowledge has remained largely unproductive. Falling too often upon a heart preoccupied by sin, it has failed to experience that fertilizing action of the Holy Spirit which gives wisdom and understanding to innocent souls—that *recta sapere*, of the Collect to the Holy Ghost. People have neither properly grasped, nor duly inculcated the *need of Frequent Communion*—that "*necessitatem* suae carnis crebro manducandi" *—for obtaining a faith—fearless, active, and invincible. Most assuredly monthly Communion was not enough for securing this result, in the majority of cases. It was not even enough for keeping men from those "evil works" which make them "hate

* "The necessity of eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood frequently." Decree *On Daily Communion*, 2d paragraph.

the light," and afterwards too often lead them to deny it.

Perhaps it will be objected that Communion by itself does not provide us with the means for defending and vindicating our faith. At all events it does something better: it enables us to *live* it. And this appears to have been the secret of the spread of Christianity through a pagan world in the first centuries of its establishment: "It is not easy to see what effect was produced by all the writings of the early apologists. There is no sign of their having moderated oppressive legislation: possibly they may have somewhat tempered the views of the educated. But it would be a mistake to exaggerate their importance. What, in the main, enable the Church to live under persecution, to triumph over indifference, contempt and calumny, was not the cogency of arguments or discourses, but her inward force manifested and shining forth in virtue—in the charity and ardent faith of the Christians in that heroic age. This it was that drew souls to Jesus Christ, by this the apologists had themselves been won; by this means Romans were brought to adore a crucified Jew and such a doctrine as the resurrection of the body succeeded in penetrating Greek heads." *

* Duchêsne, "*Histoire Ancienne de l'Eglise.*"

It is in every way desirable that study should be made to supplement the action of divine grace. But subtle discussions will always be above the comprehension of the many. What is most necessary, and at the same time easily attainable by all alike, is a faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ and in His Church of so firm a character that all the darts of impiety will shatter themselves upon this rock. Apologetics furnish faith with external weapons of defence, but Communion secures interior strength. It is "that unrivalled school in which intimacy with Jesus Christ teaches us without effort . . . to believe, hope and love.*"

As the crown of other Sacraments and the summary of other religious practices, Holy Communion is undoubtedly the means *par excellence* for keeping us inviolably attached to the truth, even were we called upon, like the martyrs, to defend it with our blood.

* Mgr., Spalding; Opportunity, p. 216.

CHAPTER VIII

DAILY COMMUNION AND CHARACTER

THE need in our times for developing "character" is a very common topic of pulpit oratory—We want Catholic men and women, it is urged, who worship duty—not pleasure and comfort—who have right principles, are not afraid to proclaim and defend them, and cling to them in their daily conduct, no matter what the cost to self. All this involves a good many qualities. First of all, a serious view of the responsibility of life—in other words, serious thinking, freedom from the cowardice of human respect, and self-conquest so as to resist the cravings of lower nature, which always incline us toward the more pleasant course of action.

"We want *men*" is the cry, and others, not realising, it is to be hoped, what they say, are prone to add: "and they only provide us with communicants!" They can hardly mean that frequent Communion is the antithesis of manliness, and that its

tendency is to produce moral "muffs" and "softies!"

The history of the Church gives the lie direct to such a preposterous and irreverent theory. As Père Cros pertinently observes:* "When Jesus Christ came into this world there were no "men" left. The Apostles commissioned by Him to give "men" to the world, only gave Him daily communicants, and yet behold "men" rose up on every side. Look at the deacon, Laurence stretched upon the gridiron. He was a distributor of Communion, but he received it himself besides giving it to others. We have the source of his manliness indicated in the words: "Because he had eat well and drunk well," a reference to the Holy Eucharist. And the gentle Agnes, too. How striking her "manliness" at the tender age of twelve! Agnes herself lets us into its secret: "*Sanguis Ejus ornavit genas meas.*"† Communion is the potent Food which—as the Church tells us in her liturgy—"nourished the martyrs unto victory." This was fully realised by the early Church, and she allowed her lay children who carried their lives hourly in their hands, to bear home in their hands of flesh provision of this

* *Enfants à la Sainte Table*: 2d Series: pp. 67-70.

† "His Blood hath lent beauty to my countenance."

Heavenly Tonic, so that "in the strength of that Food" they might endure torments and death for the Name of Jesus. Were *men* more plentiful during the pagan Renaissance, when the use of Communion was nearing its nadir? Was the XVI Century, which saw the Council of Trent and a revival of Communion, so poor in samples of heroic virility? One of these—Teresa of Avila—was, among the Saints, the manliest woman perhaps that the world has seen. Then came Jansenism, emptying the Communion rails, especially in France. Was it increased manliness that corrupted those sections of French society with most leisure for religious practices that brought on the pagan philosophy, and provoked the nemesis of the Great Terror?

For a century past the practice of Communion in the Church has been gradually ascending. Would it be easy to point to a period more noted for the general excellence of its episcopate and secular clergy, for the number of apostolic men and women, or for the multiplication of self-effacing works of corporal and spiritual mercy?

After putting the case on these lines, Père Cros sums up pithily: "There are some communicants who are not *men*. The reason might be that they do not communicate

often enough. But it is plain, at all events, that they would have been less of men had they abstained." The same plausible fallacy turns up in another shape: "Before making our young people Christians, we must first make *men* of them."

Why place in opposition two things which are closely connected and mutually react? Self-denial is the very substance of manliness—which may be defined as: "A body subjected to the mind." The unmanly allow their lower inclinations and weaknesses to get the better of their rational and higher self. Only firm repression of baser tendencies—that is to say, self-denial—can save them from moral slavery. Yet Christianity is either a school of self-denial, or it is nothing. Manliness and true Christian living, therefore, go hand in hand. They are not successive stages, but flowers which spring up together.

There is, of course, no intention to deny the existence of *natural training* in character. Character is to be found developed by natural aids in the non-Christian, just as it may be found lacking in the believer. The combination of the two is the best of all. For, if grace only fall in plenty upon the soil of a good natural character, what wonders may not be produced! On the

other hand, how disappointing is the natural method by itself with those who have the supernatural one at hand, but overlook it; Take two young people. Let one be submitted to a course of natural training in "moral energy," and the other to that of solid piety and frequent Communion. Everything else being equal, the inveterate betting man might lay 100 to 1 on the superior result in the second case and have no need to "hedge" for safety.

The following contains a similar fallacy; "*Instead of multiplying Communions, you had better see to the correction of faults.*"* This objection has already been considered by the present writer in a supplementary paragraph to "The Eucharistic Triduum." † Père Lintelo's, answer is this. Nourishment alone will not suffice for the soul's health any more than it will for the health of the body. It needs to be supported by hygiene—fresh air, exercise, etc. At the same time hygienic precautions would avail little in the absence of food. Eating and hard work are dif-

* It being herein implied that frequent Communion is not a solid form of piety, the words of Pius X., in a letter to the Jesuit Rector of one of our English Catholic colleges, are to the point. He calls daily Communion "the safe-guard of most solid piety." See "Eucharistic Triduum," p. 96.

† P. 95.

ferent things—a distinction to be seen sometimes in the home of the British workman, when the man eats (or drinks) and the wife works. But so far no one has discovered the way of working hard without eating. Now, we should be requiring hard work without food if, while exhorting souls to chastity, humility, and charity, we omitted to inculcate the need of the Divine Food for the uphill fight against self. The preaching of daily Communion no more interferes with the preaching up of the virtues than the latter does with the former. Only, the practice of the virtues without constant Communion would be like trying to reach the top floor of a building that has no staircase. If promoters of frequent Communion point to the Eucharist as the main source of courage for the struggle with passion, at all events they have a highly respectable precedent for their action: “Amid the general decline of piety, it is plain that no more efficacious remedy can be had for healing the languor of Christians, or for kindling in them a more ardent love of God in return for His goodness, than the custom of receiving frequently and daily Him Who is the very source of infinite Love.” *

* Letter of the Holy See, concerning the Corpus Tri-duum, April 10, 1907.

Passing to the opposite pole—some educators fancy they will find “*a serviceable barrier to dissipation*” in keenness for physical activity and love of open-air sports and games. This view—if pushed too far—becomes the more dangerous on account of the admixture of truth contained in it. Its main blot consists in losing sight of *supernatural* helps.

We do not pretend to deny that bodily exercises which engross the mind, demand self-control, dogged perseverance under difficulties, arouse a healthy emulation, and make for manliness of character. They also afford a vent to animal spirits which, under conditions of effeminate idleness, would be apt to expend themselves in some unworthy direction. Every school disciplinarian knows the difficulty of preserving good order when a long spell of bad weather hinders outside games. Indeed the present Pope himself called attention to this advantage of physical sports when addressing a body of young Italian Athletes who had given a sample of their prowess before him at the Vatican, some years ago.

Yet it would be a grave error to exalt a subsidiary help into an unfailing and all-sufficing prescription. To leave out Frequent Communion would be reckoning with-

out Christ. Owing to this vital oversight, people occasionally find themselves entangled in a perplexing problem.

Facts challenging their attention force them to compare the educational products of non-Catholic institutions with those of our Catholic ones, and the result does not seem always to redound to the credit of the latter. They meet with Catholic youths and maidens whose "morale" strikes them as being decidedly inferior to that of young non-Catholics of their acquaintance. "That may be so"—others reply—but at least our young people have the True Faith, an invaluable asset, surely. "No doubt"—retort the first—"but this very fact only deepens the scandal of their unsatisfactory characters. It causes the enemy to blaspheme and attribute their outward religious observance to mere hypocrisy. Now, if these young people would only throw themselves into a physically strenuous life, their moral tone would be improved. . . . Only a select few will succeed in living blameless lives with the sole aid of their faith. . . . The multitude require to be bolstered up with natural expedients of which sports are among the most attractive." *

* *Revue Pratique Apologetique*, tom. ix, p. 216.

Taking the fact above relied upon for granted, where is the flaw in the discussion upon it? The essential flaw is that Pius X.'s divine specific is left out of count. They have the "True Faith"—yes, unless they lose it. Even if they do not, there is still ground for scandal—though seldom for charges of hypocrisy—in that their Faith develops so little moral energy in them. Not by Faith alone is moral worth developed and sustained. Communion is indispensable for that. Christ—as He Himself tells us—is not only "the Truth." He is "the Life" as well. It is His "flesh"—not His Faith—that He promised to "give for the life of the world." *

The sad contrast complained of—when-ever it exists—springs from having ignored the truth so clearly exhibited in the Decree—namely, *the essential part* played by the Eucharist in the training of our Catholic youth. Those who have left school, and are now to all seeming, living mostly in sin, probably made too sparing a use of Communion at school at the time of their moral crisis. At all events, we may feel fairly certain that they are not to be found now among frequenters of the Holy Table.

* St. John vi, 52.

But the discussion here reviewed reveals another most serious flaw. It conflicts with the whole Christian system. "Only a chosen few"—it is contended—"will be able to overcome all obstacles" to a high-principled Catholic life. Such a theory runs perilously close to suggesting that Our Lord imposes upon Christian youth obligations beyond their moral power, and that the aids He furnishes for their fulfilment are inadequate. For, the duty of avoiding mortal sin is not confined "to a chosen few," but lies upon all alike.

Educators, then, may look for "a serviceable barrier against dissipation" in physical culture if they like. Bodily activity will certainly not impair that of the will. It may help somewhat to stimulate it. Yet if they lean too heavily upon this natural support, and lightly—if at all—upon the Divine stimulant of Communion—they must be prepared for many a bitter disillusion. After all, is it a fact of experience that those most given up to sports are noted for the exemplary character of their lives?

It would be far wiser for Catholics—above all for us priests—to pay far more attention to those words of Leo XIII:

"An insatiable appetite for pleasure now rages

amongst men. From their earliest childhood they are a prey to a kind of sickly contagion. But the Eucharist brings us an excellent remedy for this frightful evil." *

* Encyclical *Mirae Caritatis*.

CHAPTER IX

FREQUENT COMMUNION AND VOCATIONS

PARENTS AND VOCATIONS

WHEN dealing further back with the obstacles thrown in the way of frequent and daily Communion by the opposition of parents we said their objections were sometimes based on the fear lest their children should develop vocations either to the Altar, or to the cloister, or to both combined.

The spirit which reveals itself in the particular form of precautions against vocations in the family, is often the last relic of worldliness to leave even good Catholic parents. Where there are many children, the opposition is usually less pronounced, when it exists at all. But the father or mother who has a strong enough faith to sympathise with the religious vocation of an only son or daughter is one among a thousand. They may be able to relish the sublimity of vocations which knock at other doors than

their own. But when the dread visitor appears on their own threshold, reasons special to their case for saying; "Not at home" suggest themselves in plenty. The family name must be perpetuated. And yet we look in vain for any such incontrovertible axiom whether in the Gospels, or Fathers, or tradition. We do find in the Gospel certain words of our Lord pointing the other way: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, the same is not worthy of Me." Moreover, special rewards are promised to those who leave "father or mother. . . or lands. . ." for His sake. Many a family name has been extinguished, and sometimes from less reputable causes than a vocation to celibacy; and yet, somehow, the world seems to have survived the loss.

In the previous chapter, above referred to, educational advocates of daily Communion were counselled to meet the suspicious enquiry of parents—"What is your aim in this matter?"—by answering that their aim was no other than that of Jesus Christ Himself—namely, to preserve and strengthen the life of grace in the souls of their children. Was not this their wish also? Did they not want their children to grow up good and innocent? That, no

doubt, God did often choose more innocent souls for special consecration to His service; and that if He did this for their offspring, He would be conferring a signal favour upon the object of His choice that would draw down blessings upon the family.

There can be no doubt that frequent Communion so far favours a higher call as to supply the *best possible basis for a vocation*—namely, a childhood and youth spent in unbroken innocence. Sin always leaves its mark behind, however thoroughly and lasting the repentance. There is less to undo in a soul that has escaped all mortal sin when the formation for the higher life has to begin. But from the fact that the soil is most favourable, it does not follow that the seed of a vocation will be planted there. The spirit breatheth where it willeth. Our Lord wants holy souls for fighting His battles in the world, as well as in the sanctuary or cloister. But *He* has the choosing of recruits. We must not choose for Him by forcing into the world's ranks those whom He designs for the ecclesiastical or religious life—nor, indeed, *vice versa*. That would be like insisting upon making a soldier of one clearly marked out for peaceful pursuits.

Any suggestion that daily Communion is unfairly used in educational houses in

the capacity of a "recruiting sergeant" for the priesthood or the religious life, would show a strange misconception of the whole spiritual situation. Undue influence might conceivably be used for such purposes in other ways. But surely, if there be any influence at work in a child's frequent Communion, drawing it towards the Altar or the cloister, or both, there can be no mistake as to *Who* is exerting that influence. And no one can say that His solicitations are undue, though, heaven knows, they may well be undeserved. A curious state of mind would be needed for a parent to treat this constant intercourse between his or her boy and our Divine Lord, as if it were a case of bad companionship, or that between a daughter and the Divine Lover of souls as if some undesirable *parti* were paying his addresses!

As to facts, it may be still too soon to form a definite opinion as to the bearing of frequent Communion upon the supply of vocations. That it should greatly improve their *quality*, and diminish the number of abortive ones, is to be expected. But will it increase the quantity? There are local statistics—as Père Lintelo shows—tending to prove that an increase may well occur. But taking the whole Catholic world into

account, the evidence to hand is inadequate.

In his translation of the "Eucharistic Triduum," the present writer hazarded a view on his own account—which as yet he sees no reason to retract. The view was, that the gain in number of vocations ought by no means to be assumed in face of the present state of society throughout the world. Events are shaping in a way to suggest an increasing demand for very staunch and vigorous Christian fighters in the ranks of the laity, at a time when power, for good or evil, is passing into the hands of the democracy.* A good proportion of vocations, no doubt—though by no means all—have been inspired largely by the sense of difficulty in withstanding the allurements of a worldly life. But now that daily Communion has been opened to "all the faithful of whatever rank and condition of life," a feeling of greater security may be developed in earnest souls, at all events amongst those whose inevitable occupations in the world do not debar them from a free use of the Great Preservative.

It has just been said that frequent Communion undoubtedly prepares a soil pecul-

* Eucharistic Triduum, p. 93.

ially favourable for the reception and growth of the divine seed of vocation. A French writer* examining into the question of lost vocations, attributes the evil to a widespread lack of this well-prepared soil. Formerly we could rely much upon Christian environment and family traditions. But now—in the altered conditions of society—we have to fall back upon strength of character in the individual Catholic, fortified and rendered proof against the worst influences.

All the remedies proposed are thus reducible to one—strength of character. But when a young man has to face so many obstacles, whence shall he draw so much strength? Whence, indeed, if not from the strength of Jesus Himself, imparted to him in Holy Communion. “Have confidence”—He whispers to the communicant—“I have overcome the world.” †

Other contributory causes to loss of vocations are quoted—such as too hasty a surrender to *fear of priestly responsibilities*—the prospect of hardships in store (certainly a point to be specially weighed by any aspirant to the higher life in France or Portugal), and the contempt of the world. These alarms, however, are less likely to

* Abbé Belmont: *Pour le Sanctuaire*.

† St. John xvi, 33.

scare one whose childhood has been fervent. *Hostility* to all official representatives of Christianity seems on the increase everywhere, albeit more acute in some countries than in others. The tide of "anti-clericalism" that has swept over the Continent is advancing even to the white "cliffs of Albion," if only in the matter of education—primary and secondary. Future religious leaders in the struggle need to be true steel, and it is in the furnace of the eucharistic union that the soul gets most finely tempered.

Human respect, again, is only personal cowardice under another name. And the Body and Blood of Christ has not lost its power of giving to souls the courage of lions—mentioned by St. John Chrysostom.

Then there is the *consciousness of past sin*. Well, as regards the past, everything will be done to uproot the causes of this anxiety, while precautions will be taken against a relapse. As for the future, daily Communion is available to the ecclesiastical student. But now we ask: Why should not this powerful help be made use of from *the very first*? If a child has experienced from earliest years that his strength lies in Jesus Christ, he will not fear the future.

Natural unfitness of the candidate. This is a particular drain upon vocations which in a

considerable number of cases, results from a protracted course of neglect and indulgence in faults. The remedy should have been applied earlier. *Principiis obsta.* Combat the evil in its beginnings at school, with the aid of Communion, and it stands a fair chance of being arrested.

Parental Opposition. Confining our remarks to Catholics, due appreciation of the dignity and blessing of a vocation is not a conspicuous feature of our day. There is, perhaps, less of the ancient spirit of giving the least valuable to God's service, where there is a surplus in the family. Nor is the priestly or religious state regarded by many as a thing to be ashamed of. People are more likely to trot out certain feeble sophisms such as: "You can do much more good in the world" or "It is far more meritorious to be good amidst the temptations of the world than to fly from them," etc. From which sayings it would appear that the saints of the sanctuary or cloister never did any great good to their own kind and that the evangelical counsels are greatly overrated in Christ's teaching to the young man!* The youth or maiden, nurtured liberally upon the Bread of Life

* St. Matt. xix, 21.

from early childhood, is not likely to be deceived by the plausible fallacies with which the enemy of souls seeks to cover up the naked revolt of flesh and blood against the Will of God and His supreme right over the lives of His creatures. Constant sacramental union with "the Light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world" clears the spiritual vision, and while giving a quicker perception of Divine truths, throws the delights of earth into the shade. As a hymn for Communion has it:

"When thou enterest my heart,
Then the truth shines forth clearly,
The vanities of earth lose their charm,
And charity burns more brightly." *

But still, it remains with the child itself to secure our Lord the victory over domestic obstacles.

From whatever side we approach the subject we find ourselves brought face to face with this Great Preserver—Holy Communion. It stands pre-eminent among the various devices for fostering and improving voca-

* *Libellus Precum.*

Quando cor meum visitas,
Tunc lucet ei veritas,
Mundi vilescit vanitas,
Et intus fervet caritas.

tions. Without it, external aids like instruction, spiritual books, confraternities, meditations, annual retreats, and the like, will prove inadequate. They have often proved so in the past, probably because far more was expected from them than they were capable of giving. Colleges have sometimes been reproached with not having done their due share in contributing to the ranks of the clergy or of religious Orders. The question to ask is: "Have those in charge done the *chief thing* towards it? If not, then there is no need to search high and low for the explanation. It is right before our eyes. We have only to turn towards the Altar, and notice in its centre that "Christian's store-cupboard," * intended to provide every member of the collegiate family with the daily means of building up his strength for whatever work he may be called to do in life. If we have underfed the bodies of the young at school, why should we be at a loss to account for a break-down as soon as their tasks in life began? Why, then, are we less sensible in our treatment of children's *souls*?

Frequent and daily Communion reveals itself as the main factor in the development

* An expression of the Blessed. Curé d'Ars.

and preservation of higher vocations. It is that which—in the words of a speaker at the Metz Congress—lets fall upon the soul those germs of interior holiness without which a priest may duly acquit himself of his necessary functions, but will never become an apostle, still less a saint.” “How, asks Mgr. de Ségur, “Shall Holy Communion bring suddenly to perfection that which it has not first of all preserved?”

If we wish to reap priests—concludes Père Lintelo—we must sow Hosts.

CHAPTER X

THE TASK OF NON-PRIEST EDUCATORS

THOUGH a good deal of what now appears under the above heading has already been scattered up and down the preceding chapters, it may be well to collect together the principal points.

The class of non-priest educators here considered includes *all those who are in any way connected with the training of the young*, whether both in secular and religious knowledge, or only in the last named.

Thus congregations of religious brothers, Nuns of every kind, parents, governesses, school-mistresses, pupil teachers, and occasional catechists, or teachers of Christian doctrine—all are included in the purview of the present chapter.

The first requisite for teaching is *to know one's subject*. So deeply rooted are the old, and now authoritatively discredited, notions about Communion and everything connected with it, that it would be rash to plunge into instructions con-

cerning frequent and daily Communion without having first seriously studied it in its various bearings. Correct exposition of the subject is not likely to come naturally out of the mouth of anyone whose schooling was practically over before the appearance of the Decree of December 1905. By this it is not meant that the wrong ideas would continue to be wilfully entertained, but merely that force of mental habit will cause the teacher to let slip expressions more or less tainted with the old spirit and in conflict with the Decree, and even with one another. It would be so easy to fall into little Jansenisms like the following: "Remember children, it is the All Holy God Whom you receive in Communion. So you must take care that there is not a single spot on your souls." As a counsel of perfection this might pass (with a grain of salt), but ten to one the hearers would conclude that complete freedom from *venial* sins was a necessary condition for going frequently to Communion. Whereas, of course, such a notion runs counter to three separate Articles in the Decree* and to its whole spirit. A child with a sensitive conscience—and there are many such—would remember perhaps

* Articles I, III and V.

stealing some sugar, disobeying (a very nagging) "auntie," or telling a fib in terror of her, and would stay away from Communion.

Or again, "You must try to be very, very good when you intend going to the Altar. Our Lord does not love naughty children." The first sentence will also pass as a pious recommendation, but the child might gather, in opposition to the express teaching of the Decree, that Communion is "a reward for virtue." As to the second part, it is simply untrue. So much does our Lord love little children that are naughty, that He has led His Vicar to urge those in charge of them, to strive that these same children should approach the Holy Table very frequently and—if possible—daily, in order that He may help them to become good. Even were it a case of mortal sin, although confession would be necessary, yet so much does our Lord love sinful souls that He died for them and continually invites them to repentance, and to receive Him as a safeguard for the future.

Or once again: "You must never go to Communion without asking the priest's leave." First, there is no question any longer of confessors presuming to "allow" or to "forbid" Communion. Secondly, the asking of "advice," merely mentioned

in the Decree, is a recommendation, and not a *condition* for a lawful and consequently, fruitful Communion. Moreover, there is nothing in the Decree to show that this praiseworthy act of submitting oneself to priestly counsel is intended to be repeated constantly. Unless further explanation were added, the above speech would probably result in a child's missing its Communion on some occasion just because it had not asked the priest.*

These are a few samples of blunders showing how necessary it is to grasp fully the teaching of the Papal Decree. Hence every instructor should be quite familiar with the whole text of the Decree.† Equally familiar acquaintance should be made with the Decree "On the Age for First Communion," the chief enactments of which are accessible to all.‡ Article VI of the same deserves special attention.

Next the instructor would do well to read some of *the literature on the subject*, in which the meaning of these two Decrees is

* Elsewhere we have stigmatised as it deserves a vastly aggravated form of the above.

† To be had in "Acts and Decrees,"
bourne & Co., with other eucharistic Decrees.

‡ *Ibid.*, latest edition. The *full* text appears in "Early First Communion." (Washbourne.)

explained more fully, in conformity with the chief commentaries.*

Prayer, too, must not be forgotten. By its means we shall draw down a blessing on our words to render them effective.

The above points may be regarded as Preparation for giving eucharistic training to the young. Now for the actual work.

This work is of two kinds: Public and Private: that is to say, we may deal with the children *in a body*—and this is the chief and most profitable part of our task—or again, we may, with necessary discretion, counsel *the individual child*.

1. *In Public*. Instructors should give out boldly and plainly the true and complete doctrine of *daily Communion*,† for that is the goal to be aimed at, although in practice they will often have to be contented with less, especially in the case of certain classes of children. Daily Communion, then, should be put before them as the ordinary, normal diet of a soul in the state of grace and the best means of keeping it always in the same. The conditions for *increasing* the fruit of

* A list of publications will be found at the end of this book.

† See in earlier chapter for the right and the wrong way of speaking before those who are unable to communicate very often.

Communion should be explained—such as attentive preparation and thanksgiving; and the principal objections to the practice should be met and solidly refuted.

Here, then, is a work well deserving all the instructor's zeal. Communion is the chief act of every Christian's spiritual life. On it depends the "renewal in Christ" which is to produce that revival of Catholic fervour so greatly desired by the Vicar of Christ. What a blessed privilege it is to be permitted to share in so holy and glorious an enterprise!

Instruction of the mind must, however, be supplemented with words of exhortation for *moving the wills* of children.

(A) *The Loving "Desire of Jesus Christ."*

Children are easily moved by love and affection. They love where they are loved. Hence the teacher should dwell upon the great love of the Sacred Heart for man, and for children in particular—giving illustrations from our Lord's life in a graphic and interesting way. This is the most effective method for helping the young to realize our Lord's desire to unite Himself to them in Holy Communion. *He wants them to come because He loves them.* That is a simple notion which will appeal to the smallest child with understanding.

Then the desire of the Vicar of Christ should be dwelt on, with a reference to the charge given to Peter and his successors by our Lord of guiding His sheep in the right path. (St. John, xxi, 15.) Proofs of the Pope's love for the little ones may be drawn, for instance, from the letters he has deigned to write, enclosing souvenirs, to little First Communicants.*

(B) Our Need.

Then let us insist on the other side of the picture—the Children's need of Our Lord. Whenever we speak to them of the evil of mortal sin and its consequences in the other life, mention should be made of Communion as the Great Preserver from both. It is easy to draw a picture of badness—suitable, of course, to the age of our hearers—and say: "You wouldn't wish to be like that, would you? And then explain that Communion affords the best means of avoiding such badness.

Prayers to the Blessed Sacrament (let

* See Appendix to "Child Prepared for First Communion" (Washbourne & Co.). Also, the teacher might refer to the pilgrimage of little First Communicants to the Vatican at Easter, 1912, and the loving reception and treatment they received at the hands of Pius X.

them be short!*) especially in the form of "spiritual communion," recited before and after the instruction, as also hymns to the Blessed Sacrament, would greatly help.

There are also external acts of religion which may be turned into vehicles of eucharistic teaching. Thus, in the matter of children's *genuflections* in Church. When they bend the wrong knee to the ground in the single genuflection, instead of merely making them do it the right way (which is with the *right* knee) a word reminding them of our Lord's presence in the Tabernacle would help on the cause, and give the child a *motive* for genuflecting with care. Again, a reminder that they can get an indulgence every time they make some slight sign of reverence when passing a church or chapel where the Blessed Sacrament is kept, would foster their love and reverence for the Eucharist. The suggestion, too, might be thrown out that it would be still nicer if they just slipped into the church, if open, to greet our Lord—if only to say "Good Morning" or "Good Night" to their Great Friend in the tabernacle. Older people have done this and have not thought it childish. In the Church of—— Dublin,

* See "Ejaculations," etc., at the end of this work.

late at night, when the building was cleared and about to be closed, a priest, still lingering in his confessional, caught sight of a poor workman kneeling at the altar rails, and overheard him saying: "Good night, sweet Lord, good-night, I could not come sooner, but I will be back the first thing in the morning." The Father thought he would see what happened in the morning. Sure enough, as soon as the doors had been opened, there was the good fellow on his knees praying fervently.

Some inquisitive person might ask "On what ground can you confide instruction in this subject to the catechist, whose usual duty is confined to explaining the Articles of the Creed, the Commandments, and Confession?" The catechist acts as an assistant to the priest in his task of instruction. And now that the Holy See obliges the priest to exhort all the faithful to the practice of frequent and daily Communion "frequently and with much zeal," * the same duty is naturally to be shared by his humble auxiliaries.

2. *In Private.* If it be important—and it is so—to state the doctrine of daily Communion frankly and with earnestness

* Decree, Article 6.

it is equally so to do this in a way that will not cause reasonable annoyance or embarrassment to those children who do not put the teacher's exhortations into practice. Particular care, in this respect, is needed when dealing with the individual child apart from the rest. Our reference to the subject should be *objective* rather than personal to the child. Our theme should be *Communion* and not the *communicants*. We should be specially on our guard against giving a child cause to think that our attitude towards him will be favourable or severe, in proportion as he goes oftener or more rarely to Communion. And if the number of children addressed even *en masse* be small, this caution will need to be kept well in view. Otherwise we shall have children going to the Holy Table either for the purpose of currying favour with, or escaping the displeased looks of, their teachers, and the *freedom* of the practice will be endangered—and sometimes, it may be, with most regrettable consequences to our Lord.

One could hardly blame some wise and experienced teacher, conscious of possessing the full confidence of his pupils, for tactfully putting in an occasional *word of encouragement* to the fervent or a stimulus to the

lazy, in private conversation. Tact is essential; but, besides, two precautions should be observed:

(1) Never seek to penetrate into the secrets of the child's conscience.

(2) While showing the advantages of Communion, take care to refer the child to its confessor, and do not pretend to give any decision yourself.

It is easy to say, "I should recommend you to talk to your confessor about it, and see what he advises." There is sometimes a danger lest the religious habit worn by a non-priest, male or female, should betray the wearer into assuming the rôle of spiritual director. When we have no means, and still less right, to explore the secrets of consciences, decisions depending upon the interior state of the latter, are fraught with peril. At the same time it is praiseworthy to put souls in communication with their authorised guides, leaving to the guides their proper office of leading the sheep to the rich pastures of the Eucharist. An example of gross indiscretion—at variance with the rules given above—would be to cross-question a child (or indeed, anyone) as to the *reason* of its staying away from Communion.

Another possible abuse—referred to else-

where—would be to cast up their faults in presence of children, on the ground of their frequent Communions.

Or for a teacher—religious or other—to say: “Mind, you are not to go to Communion without telling me.” As the Pope does not make consultation with a confessor a necessary condition for going to Communion, the said teacher would be usurping a power exceeding that of the priest himself.

As we are talking of abuses, the following passage, occurring in a different work, may be reprinted: “Still less, of course, must one attempt to limit Communions of children as a punishment for their daily faults. That would be a gross violation of the child’s Catholic rights, a piece of unlawful interference in the ministry of the Sacraments and an utter disregard for the authority of the Holy See.* But, to put the matter on lower ground, a mere sense of humour ought to be sufficient to save us from such grotesque pretensions.

As we are here summing up points, which concern the treatment of children in regard to frequent and daily Communion, the attention of non-Priest educators may be

* *The Spouse of Christ and Daily Communion*. Sands & Co., pp. 59–60 of Article I of the Decree, “so that no one,” etc.

once more directed to what has been said in previous chapters concerning the following: Making the practice of individuals a subject of remark and gossip, above all before other children; exacting too much in the matter of Preparations and Thanksgiving, whether in quantity or concentration of mind; attaching *any mark of distinction* to those who are going to Communion—and thus indirectly marking those who do not, e.g., in costume, place in chapel or church, or privilege of any sort or kind.*

What an enviable task is that of the eucharistic teachers! They are privileged to walk in the footsteps of the holy Precursor of Jesus, John the Baptist, and to “prepare the way of the Lord” into the hearts of

* Conceivably, in some very small country mission, people might seek to get over the ubiquitous difficulty of the *breakfast*, in the case of day-school children who wish to communicate frequently, by supplying them *gratis* with that meal somewhere near the church, or school. This expedient would hardly be spiritually safe if a free breakfast would be a “consideration” to the parental pocket. This it would often be in larger towns, with *very* poor and less exemplary parents. If, however, the above plan were to be considered prudent by the priest in special circumstances, at all events the breakfast fare *should not be better* than the home is likely to provide. There must be no virtual bribery, or disaster may result. (We may add, by the way, that the fare should *not be worse*, either; or parents might object to the Communion.)

His beloved children! Theirs, too, will surely be the reward stored up for those who "instruct others unto justice," since they point out (besides, as it is to be hoped, using it themselves) the great sacramental secret and support of a holy life. Those among them who belong to the Apostleship of Prayer have placed in their hands a means of peculiar efficacy for forwarding the undoubted intention and "desire" of the Sacred Heart—declared to be such by Its Vicar upon earth.* Thus, it lies in their power to hasten on the coming of Christ's Kingdom in the hearts of men, according to their motto.

No more apostolic subject of prayer could be proposed to them than that all of us—priests, teachers, parents and children—may be fired with *self-sacrificing* zeal for spreading the use of daily—or very frequent Communion. To this end, the daily recital of the Pope's indulgenced prayer for this intention may be earnestly recommended to all.†

* Decree on Daily Communion, 3d par.

† "O most sweet Jesus, Who didst come," etc., "Messenger" Office, Dublin.

CHAPTER XI

ORGANIZED PROMOTION

EUCCHARISTIC LEAGUES AND ASSOCIATIONS.

THE organizations here referred to are those formed for the laity. For priests there are two chief associations in existence having for their object devotion towards the Holy Eucharist. These are "The Priest-Adorers," and "The Priests' Daily Communion League." Both these institutions are due to the zeal for the Eucharist with which the Ven. Père Eynard inspired his spiritual children—the Fathers of the Congregation of the Most Holy Sacrament.

Though both centre in the Holy Eucharist, each has its *distinctive* purpose and aim. That of the "Priest-Adorers" is to pay to the Holy Sacrament continual adoration and Praise, Thanksgiving and Reparation and Supplication; in a word, *worship*, according to the four ends of sacrifice. The object of the "Daily Communion League" is to band Priests together

who pledge themselves to *promote the frequent and daily Reception of Holy Communion* among the faithful, in accordance with the Papal Decree; and to do this by means of *prayer, writing, or word*. Shortly: while the former institution is chiefly bent upon priestly *worship* of the Eucharist, the last named proposes to foster its *sacramental reception*.

But our present concern is organization for the laity. It was natural that the two associations for Priests just mentioned should suggest corresponding ones for the general faithful.

As far back as 1897, in virtue of a Brief dated May 8, the Archconfraternity of the Blessed Sacrament was canonically erected in the church of SS. Andrew and Claudius belonging to the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament, in Rome. Its members were to practise Adoration and otherwise show zeal for the honour of the Blessed Sacrament. At that time, of course, the Decree on Daily Communion had not yet appeared; and if we turn to Beringer—a Consultor of the old Roman Congregation of Indulgences and a recognised authority—we find reception of Communion entirely absent from the stated aims of the Archconfraternity as approved and indulged by

the Holy See.* It appears, however, that in a Manual for members of this association, composed by Père Eymard considerable prominence was given to the practice of frequent Communion. This will account for the fact that the Archconfraternity is now being increasingly employed amongst us as an instrument for spreading the "salutary practice" as well as worship of the Blessed Sacrament among its members. Thus, in the "Counsels" given in our English "Manual" of the confraternity, members are recommended to receive Communion "as frequently as possible," and in the latest edition of this "Manual" † they are urged to do so "daily if possible." This earnest counsel is, moreover, reinforced by the printing, on the back of the booklet, of Pope Pius's prayer for the extension of daily Communion. Still, it is fairly evident that the first idea of the Archconfraternity was *worship*, rather than *reception*, and that the organization was afterwards adapted as far as possible to the newly arisen need of fostering frequent and daily Communion. There is no intention here to question the expediency of this adaptation, nor the advisability of making use of the Archcon-

* *Les Indulgences*, Vol. II, p. 128 (Edition, 1905).

† Orphans' Press, Rochdale.

fraternity, or "People's Eucharistic League" for furthering the Decree. It is evidently doing an excellent work amongst us and is enlarging its membership both in Great Britain and Ireland. At the same time, it was lawful to hope that some Lay League, with the apostolic promotion of frequent and daily Communion for its distinctive object, and approved by the Holy See should be given us forming a genuine *lay* counterpart of the "Priests' Daily Communion League," as the Archconfraternity is of the Priest-Adorers.

Such an organization seems the more desirable because the "People's League," admirable though it be in itself, does not further the practice of frequent and daily Communion outside its own body except in a somewhat indirect fashion, namely through the natural tendency of members to invite others to join their League which includes the "salutary practice" among its counsels to associates. One looks for some lay organization which—without being indiscreetly meddlesome—will lead the faithful in general to daily Communion by *direct apostolic action*.(*)

The Roman "Pious Union for First

* E.g., by such methods as are proposed further back under "Apostolate of Daily Communion."

Communion"—recently raised by Pius X. to the functions of a "Primary," or universally "affiliating association"—seems to approach nearest to the apostolic model of the Priests' Communion League, though the scope of its apostolate is limited to work among children and younger people. Its object is to spread the knowledge and execution of the Decree "*Quam Singulari*"—On the Age for First Communion—It is open to all the laity of both sexes, as well as to priests. Members engage 1. To use their opportunities for securing that children shall make their First Communion at the earliest age possible (i. e., at the dawn of reason), and shall continue receiving Communion very frequently, and, if possible, daily, afterwards. 2. To say each day one "Our Father" and "Hail Mary," with the ejaculation: "Our Lady of the Most Holy Sacrament, pray for us." This Pious Union is obviously most suitable for *all educators of the young*—secular or religious, for parents, god-parents, catechists—in fact, for any who have, or may have, anything to say to the religious upbringing of children, whether in their own families, or among acquaintances. The Holy See has enriched the Union with spiritual favours and indulgences.

INDULGENCES

Granted to members of the " Pious Union " by the Papal Brief " Societates Fidelium " of March 26, 1912.

I. PLENARY INDULGENCES

On the conditions of Confession, Communion, a Visit to some Church or Public Oratory, and prayer for the Pope's Intentions:

- (a) On the day of enrolment.
- (b) The Solemnity of Corpus Christi.
- (c) The feast of St. Tharcisius (Aug. 15).
- (d) The feast of St. Thomas Aquinas (March 7).
- (e) The feast of St. Paschal Baylon (May 17).
- (f) Maundy Thursday.
- (g) On the day of accompanying a child to its First Communion provided the person communicate along with it.
- (h) On the day of a General Communion for Children, provided the person receive Communion in the church where it is held.

2. PARTIAL INDULGENCE.

An Indulgence of 100 days for every act of piety or charity performed, with at least a contrite heart, in accord with the statutes and object of the Pious Union.

All the above Indulgences are applicable to the Holy Souls in Purgatory.

N. B. The above list is taken from the "Instruction" issued to members of the Union by its Central Administration, 160 Via del Pozzetto, Rome.

Another Guild or League directly devoted to promoting frequent and daily Communion has lately been mentioned in the Catholic Press as being in process of formation in the United States. At the time of writing, the scheme had not been finally set on foot, and hence it is impossible here to do more than wish it all success. According to its original idea it was intended particularly for young people in houses of training, but with the further aid of extending frequent and daily Communion beyond their walls and perpetuating it in the lives of the scholars of both sexes.

APPENDIX

A [GOLDEN ENCYCLICAL

It is much to be regretted that the beautiful Encyclical Letter of Leo XIII., on "The Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist,"—known as the "Mirae Caritatis"—should have fallen almost completely out of notice in this country. This is the more surprising because that pronouncement dates back no more than ten years. It appeared in May, 1902, and a good English version was soon published by Messrs. Burns & Oates, London. Recent enquiries show that this translation is now, and has been for some time past, out of print.

Apart from its august origin, several circumstances combine to enhance its claim to be more familiarly known by the Catholic "who reads." The "Mirae Caritatis" was the last memorable Letter issuing from the able and fertile pen of Pius X.'s illustrious predecessor in Peter's Chair. This fact,

when coupled with the particular theme of the Encyclical, gives to the latter a special religious pathos. The Blessed Sacrament was the dying legacy of the Sacred Heart to men. Our Lord bequeathed this lasting monument of all His loving deeds for mankind at a moment when the dark shadows of Calvary were closing fast around Him. He gave It to us on "the same night in which he was betrayed." * And Pope Leo, also—the Vicar of Christ—delivered to us his panegyric of the Divine Gift at a time when he, too, felt conscious of his approaching death. For he writes:

"It was towards the close of His mortal life that Christ, our Lord, left this memorial of His measureless love for men—this means of support, 'for the life of the world.' † And precisely for this reason we, being so soon to depart this life, can wish for nothing better than that it may be given us to stir up and foster in the hearts of all men the dispositions of mindful gratitude and due devotion towards this wondrous Sacrament, wherein most especially lie, as we hold, the hope and the efficient cause of salvation and of that peace which all men so anxiously seek."

* I. Cor. xi, 23.

† St. John vi, 52.

Not less striking and worthy to be pondered is Leo's masterly exposition of the "Mystery of Faith"—as a remedy for the decay of faith around us and for the prevalent thirst for sensual delights—in which, moreover, the far-seeing Pontiff reveals a clear foresight of the troubles soon to arise from modernism.

There is another notable feature of this Letter that should fix it well in the memory of anyone who studies the eucharistic development marking the life of the Catholic Church for nearly half a century past. The "Mirae Caritatis" as its contents prove—is nothing if not an unmistakable prelude to a Decree on daily Communion, which, in its turn, pointed to the "Quam Singulari" as its inevitable sequel. Pius X. has but picked up the threads of doctrine where the dying hands of Leo had dropped them. And herein lies a sufficient answer to those who might be tempted to view the daily Communion movement as if it were merely some special "hobby" of the reigning Pontiff. Popes may come, and Popes may go, but the Church—the moral body of Jesus Christ—quickened by the indwelling Spirit of God, pursues her *continuous* life unhindered. The developments due to her God-given vitality are not arrested by a

change of person in Christ's earthly representation. Rather, a new Vicar of Christ is himself incorporated into the divinely animated organism, as its chief member, and shares in its vital progress, while at the same time directing and presiding over the same under the special guidance of the Holy Spirit.

For the above reasons, amongst others, it seemed advisable to rescue this Encyclical from the practical oblivion into which it was falling, by reprinting it between our covers. Let us hope that some way will be found for giving to so precious a papal legacy a wider re-circulation in our midst than it can well obtain by inclusion in a specialist work like the present.

AN ENCYCLICAL LETTER OF HIS
HOLINESS LEO XIII. BY DIVINE
PROVIDENCE POPE, ON THE MOST
HOLY EUCHARIST

TO OUR VENERABLE BRETHREN, THE
PATRIARCHS, PRIMATES, ARCHBISHOPS,
BISHOPS, AND OTHER LOCAL ORDINARIES,
HAVING PEACE AND COMMUNION WITH
THE APOSTOLIC SEE. LEO XIII., POPE.

Venerable Brethren,

Health and Apostolic Benediction.

To examine into the nature and to promote the effects of those manifestations of His wondrous love which, like rays of light, stream forth from Jesus Christ—this, as befits Our sacred office, has ever been, and this, with His help, to the last breath of Our life will ever be Our earnest aim and endeavour. For, whereas Our lot has been cast in an age that is bitterly hostile to justice and truth, we have not failed, as you have been reminded by the Apostolic letter which we recently addressed to you,

to do what in us lay, by Our instructions and admonitions, and by such practical measures as seemed best suited for their purpose, to dissipate the contagion of error in its many shapes, and to strengthen the sinews of the Christian life. Among these efforts of Ours there are two in particular, of recent memory, closely related to each other, from the recollection whereof we gather some fruit of comfort, the more seasonable by reason of the many causes of sorrow that weigh us down. One of these is the occasion on which We directed, as a thing most desirable, that the entire human race should be consecrated by a special act to the Sacred Heart of Christ our Redeemer; the other that on which We so urgently exhorted all those who bear the name Christian to cling loyally to Him Who, by divine ordinance, is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," not for individuals alone, but for every rightly constituted society. And now that same apostolic charity, ever watchful over the vicissitudes of the Church, moves and in a manner compels Us to add one thing more, in order to fill up the measure of what We have already conceived and carried out. This is, to commend to all Christians, more earnestly than heretofore, the all-holy Eucharist, forasmuch as it is a divine gift

proceeding from the very Heart of the Redeemer, Who "with desire desireth" this singular mode of union with men, a gift most admirably adapted to be the means whereby the salutary fruits of His redemption may be distributed. Indeed We have not failed in the past, more than once, to use Our authority and to exercise Our zeal in this behalf. It gives Us much pleasure to recall to mind that We have officially approved, and enriched with canonical privileges, not a few institutions and confraternities having for their object the perpetual adoration of the Sacred Host; that We have encouraged the holding of Eucharistic Congresses, the results of which have been as profitable as the attendance at them has been numerous and distinguished; that We have designated as the heavenly patron of these and similar undertakings St. Paschal Baylon, whose devotion to the mystery of the Eucharist was so extraordinary.

Accordingly, Venerable Brethren, it has seemed good to Us to address you on certain points connected with this same mystery, for the defence and honour of which the solicitude of the Church has been so constantly engaged, for which Martyrs have given their lives, which has afforded to men

of the highest genius a theme to be illustrated by their learning, their eloquence, their skill in all the arts; and this We will do in order to render more clearly evident, and more widely known those special characteristics by virtue of which it is so singularly adapted to the needs of these our times. It was towards the close of His mortal life that Christ our Lord left this memorial of His measureless love for men, this powerful means of support "for the life of the world." * And precisely for this reason We, being so soon to depart from this life, can wish for nothing better than that it may be granted to us to stir up and foster in the hearts of all men the dispositions of mindful gratitude and due devotion towards this wondrous Sacrament, wherein most especially lie, as We hold, the hope and the efficient cause of salvation and of that peace which all men so anxiously seek.

Some there are, no doubt, who will express their surprise that for the manifold troubles and grievous afflictions by which our age is harassed we should have determined to seek for remedies and redress in this quarter rather than elsewhere, and in some, perchance, our words will excite a certain

* St. John vi, 52.

peevish disgust. But this is only the natural result of pride; for when this vice has taken possession of the heart, it is inevitable that Christian faith, which demands a most willing docility, should languish, and that a murky darkness in regard of divine truths should close in upon the mind; so that in the case of many these words should be made good: "Whatever things they know not, they blaspheme." * We, however, so far from being hereby turned aside from the design which We have taken in hand, are on the contrary determined all the more zealously and diligently to hold up the light for the guidance of the well disposed, and, with the help of the united prayers of the faithful, earnestly to implore forgiveness for those who speak evil of holy things.

THE SOURCE OF LIFE.

To know with an entire faith what is the excellence of the most holy Eucharist is in truth to know what that work is which, in the might of His mercy, God, made man, carried out on behalf of the human race. For as a right faith teaches us to acknowledge and to worship Christ as the sovereign cause of our salvation, since He by His wisdom,

* St. Jude, 10.

His laws, His ordinance, His example, and by the shedding of His Blood, made all things new; so the same faith likewise teaches us to acknowledge Him and to worship Him as really present in the Eucharist, as verily abiding through all time in the midst of men, in order that as their Master, their Good Shepherd, their most acceptable Advocate with the Father, He may impart to them of His own inexhaustible abundance the benefits of that redemption which He has accomplished. Now if any one will seriously consider the benefits which flow from the Eucharist he will understand that conspicuous and chief among them all is that in which the rest, without exception are included; in a word, it is for men the source of life, of that life which best deserves the name. "The bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world."* In more than one way, as We have elsewhere declared, is Christ "the life." He himself declared that the reason of His advent among men was this, that he might bring them the assured fulness of a more than merely human life. "I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly."† Every one is aware that no

* St. John vi, 52.

† St. John x, 10.

sooner had "the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared," * than there at once burst forth a certain creative force which issued in a new order of things and pulsed through all the veins of society, civil and domestic. Hence arose new relations between man and man; new rights and new duties, public and private; henceforth a new direction was given to government, to education, to the arts; and most important of all, man's thoughts and energies were turned towards religious truth and the pursuit of holiness. Thus was life communicated to man, a life truly celestial and divine. And thus are we to account for those expressions which so often occur in Holy Writ, "the tree of life," "the word of life," "the book of life," "the crown of life," and particularly "the bread of life."

But now—since this life of which we are speaking bears a definite resemblance to the natural life of man—as the one draws its nourishment and strength from food, so also the other must have its own food whereby it may be sustained and augmented. And here it will be opportune to recall to mind on what occasion and in what manner Christ moved and prepared the

* Tit. iii, 4.

hearts of men for the worthy and due reception of the living bread which He was about to give them. No sooner had the rumour spread of the miracle which He had wrought on the shores of the lake of Tiberias, when with the multiplied loaves He fed the multitude, than many forthwith flocked to Him in the hope that they too, perchance, might be the recipients of a like favour. And, just as He had taken occasion from the water which she had drawn from the well to stir up in the Samaritan woman a thirst for that "water which springeth up unto life everlasting,"* so now Jesus availed Himself of this opportunity to excite in the minds of the multitude a keen hunger for the bread "which endureth unto life everlasting." † Nor, as He was careful to explain to them, was the bread which He promised the same as that heavenly manna which had been given to their fathers during their wanderings in the desert, or again the same as that which, to their amazement, they had recently received from Him; but He was Himself that bread, "I," said He, "am the bread of life." ‡ And He urges this still further upon them all both by invitation and by precept: "If any man

* St. John iv, 14. † St. John vi, 27. ‡ St. John vi, 48.

shall eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world." * And in these words He brings home to them the gravity of the precept: "Amen, Amen, I say to you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you." † Away then with the widespread but most mischievous error of those who give it as their opinion that the reception of the Eucharist is in a manner reserved for those narrow-minded persons (as they are deemed) who rid themselves of the cares of the world in order to find rest in some kind of professedly religious life. For this gift, than which none can be more excellent or more conducive to salvation, is offered to all those, whatever their office or condition may be, who wish—as every one ought to wish—to foster in themselves that life of divine grace whose goal is the attainment of the life of blessedness with God.

Indeed it is greatly to be desired that those men would rightly esteem and would make due provision for life everlasting, whose industry or talents or rank have put it in their power to shape the course of human

* St. John vi, 52.

† St. John vi, 54.

events. But alas! we see with sorrow that such men too often proudly flatter themselves that they have conferred upon this world, as it were, a fresh lease of life and prosperity, inasmuch as by their own energetic action they are urging it on to the race for wealth, to a struggle for the possession of commodities which minister to the love of comfort and display. And yet, whithersoever we turn, we see that human society, if it be estranged from God, instead of enjoying that peace in its possessions for which it had sought, is shaken and tossed like one who is in the agony and heat of fever; for while it anxiously strives for prosperity and trusts to it alone, it is pursuing an object that ever escapes it, snatching at one that ever eludes the grasp. For as men and states alike necessarily have their being from God, so they can do nothing good except in God through Jesus Christ, through whom every best and choicest gift has ever proceeded and proceeds. But the source and chief of all these gifts is the venerable Eucharist, which not only nourishes and sustains that life the desire whereof demands our most strenuous efforts, but also enhances beyond measure that dignity of man of which in these days we hear so much. For what can be more honourable

or a more worthy object of desire than to be made, as far as possible, sharers and partakers in the divine nature? Now this is precisely what Christ does for us in the Eucharist, wherein, after having raised man by the operation of His grace to a supernatural state, He yet more closely associates and unites him with Himself. For there is this difference between the food of the body and that of the soul, that whereas the former is changed into our substance, the latter changes us into its own; so that St. Augustine makes Christ Himself say: "You shall not change Me into yourself as you do the food of your body, but you shall be changed into Me." *

THE MYSTERY OF FAITH.

Moreover, in this most admirable Sacrament, which is the chief means whereby men are engrafted on the divine nature, men also find the most efficacious help towards progress in every kind of virtue. And first of all in faith. In all ages faith has been attacked; for although it elevates the human mind by bestowing on it the knowledge of the highest truths, yet because, while it makes known the existence of divine

* Confessions, bk. vii, c. x.

mysteries, it yet leaves in obscurity the mode of their being, it is therefore thought to degrade the intellect. But whereas in past times particular articles of faith have been made by turns the object of attack, the seat of war has since been enlarged and extended, until it has come to this, that men deny altogether that there is anything above and beyond nature. Now nothing can be better adapted to promote a renewal of the strength and fervour of faith in the human mind than the mystery of the Eucharist, the "mystery of faith," as it has been most appropriately called. For in this one mystery the entire supernatural order, with all its wealth and variety of wonders, is in a manner summed up and contained: "He hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works, a merciful and gracious Lord; He hath given food to them that fear Him." * For whereas God has subordinated the whole supernatural order to the Incarnation of His Word, in virtue whereof salvation has been restored to the human race, according to those words of the Apostle: "He hath purposed. . . to re-establish all things in Christ, that are in heaven and on earth, in Him,"† the

* Psalm cx, 4-5.

† Eph. i, 9-10.

Eucharist, according to the testimony of the holy Fathers, should be regarded as in a manner a continuation and extension of the Incarnation. For in and by it the substance of the Incarnate Word is united with individual men, and the supreme Sacrifice offered on Calvary is in a wondrous manner renewed, as was signified beforehand by Malachy in the words: "In every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a pure oblation." * And this miracle, itself the very greatest of its kind, is accompanied by innumerable other miracles; for here all the laws of nature are suspended; the whole substance of the bread and wine is changed into the Body and the Blood; the species of bread and wine are sustained by the divine power without the support of any underlying substance; the Body of Christ is present in many places at the same time, that is to say, wherever the Sacrament is consecrated. And in order that human reason may the more willingly pay its homage to this great mystery, there have not been wanting, as an aid to faith, certain prodigies wrought in its honour, both in ancient times and in our own, of which in more than one place there exists public and notable records and

* Mal. i, 11.

memorials. It is plain that by this Sacrament faith is fed, in it the mind finds its nourishment, the objections of rationalists are brought to naught, and abundant light is thrown on the supernatural order.

But that decay of faith in divine things of which We have spoken is the effect not only of pride, but also of moral corruption. For if it is true that a strict morality improves the quickness of man's intellectual powers, and if on the other hand, as the maxims of pagan philosophy and the admonitions of divine wisdom combine to teach us, the keenness of the mind is blunted by bodily pleasures, how much more, in the region of revealed truths, do these same pleasures obscure the light of faith, or even, by the just judgment of God, entirely extinguish it. For these pleasures at the present day an insatiable appetite rages, infecting all classes as with an infectious disease, even from tender years. Yet even for so terrible an evil there is a remedy close at hand in the divine Eucharist. For in the first place it puts a check on lust by increasing charity, according to the words of St. Augustine, who says, speaking of charity, "As it grows, lust diminishes; when it reaches perfection, lust is no more." *

* De diversis quaestionibus lxxxiii, q. 36.

Moreover the most chaste flesh of Jesus keeps down the rebellion of our flesh, as St. Cyril of Alexandria taught, "For Christ abiding in us lulls to sleep the law of the flesh which rages in our members." * Then, too, the special and most pleasant fruit of the Eucharist is that which is signified in the words of the prophet: "What is the good thing of Him," that is, of Christ, "and what is His beautiful thing, but the corn of the elect and the wine that engendereth virgins," † producing, in other words, that flower and fruitage of a strong and constant purpose of virginity which, even in an age enervated by luxury, is daily multiplied and spread abroad in the Catholic Church, with those advantages to religion and to human society, wherever it is found, which are plain to see.

To this it must be added that by this same Sacrament our hope of everlasting blessedness, based on our trust in the divine assistance, is wonderfully strengthened. For the edge of that longing for happiness, which is so deeply rooted in the hearts of all men from their birth, is whetted ever more and more by the experience of the deceitfulness of earthly goods, by the unjust violence of wicked men, and by all those other afflictions to which mind and body are subject.

* Lib. iv, c. ii, in Joan. vi, 57.

† Zach. ix, 17.

Now the venerable Sacrament of the Eucharist is both the source and the pledge of blessedness and of glory, and this, not for the soul alone, but for the body also. For it enriches the soul with an abundance of heavenly blessings, and fills it with a sweet joy which far surpasses man's hope and expectations; it sustains him in adversity, strengthens him in the spiritual combat, preserves him for life everlasting, and as a special provision for the journey accompanies him thither. And in the frail and perishable body that Divine Host, which is the immortal Body of Christ, implants a principle of resurrection, a seed of immortality, which one day must germinate. That to this source man's soul and body will be indebted for both these boons has been the constant teaching of the Church, which has dutifully re-affirmed the affirmation of Christ; "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." *

In connection with this matter it is of importance to consider that in the Eucharist, seeing that it was instituted by Christ as "a perpetual memorial of His passion" † is proclaimed to the Christian the necessity

* St. John vi, 55.

† Opusc. lvii, Offic. de festo Corporis Christi.

of a salutary self-chastisement. For Jesus said to those first priests of His: "Do this in memory of Me;" * that is to say, do this for the commemoration of My pains, My sorrows, My grievous afflictions, My death upon the cross. Wherefore this Sacrament is at the same time a Sacrifice, seasonable throughout the entire period of our penance; and it is likewise a standing exhortation to all manner of toil, and a solemn and severe rebuke to those carnal pleasures which some are not ashamed so highly to praise and extol; "As often as ye shall eat this bread, and drink this chalice, ye shall announce the death of the Lord, until He come." †

THE BOND OF CHARITY.

Furthermore, if anyone will diligently examine into the causes of the evils of our day, he will find that they arise from this, that as charity towards God has grown cold, the mutual charity of men among themselves has likewise cooled. Men have forgotten that they are children of God and brethren in Jesus Christ; they care for nothing except their own individual interests; the interests and the rights of

* St. Luke xxii, 18.

† I. Cor. xi, 26.

others they not only make light of but often attack and invade. Hence frequent disturbances and strifes between class and class; arrogance, oppression, fraud on the part of the more powerful; misery, envy, and turbulence among the poor. These are evils for which it is in vain to seek a remedy in legislation, in threats of penalties to be incurred, or in any other device of merely human prudence. Our chief care and endeavour ought to be, according to the admonitions which We have more than once given at considerable length, to secure the union of classes in a mutual interchange of dutiful services, a union which, having its origin in God, shall issue in deeds that reflect the true spirit of Jesus Christ and a genuine charity. This charity Christ brought into the world, with it He would have all hearts on fire. For it alone is capable of affording to soul and body alike, even in this life, a foretaste of blessedness, since it restrains man's inordinate self-love, and puts a check on avarice, which "is the root of all evil." * And whereas it is right to uphold all the claims of justice as between the various classes of society, nevertheless it is only with the efficacious aid of charity, which

* I Tim. vi, 10.

tempers justice, that the "equality" which St. Paul commended,* and which is so salutary for human society, can be established and maintained. This then is what Christ intended when He instituted this venerable Sacrament, namely, by awakening charity towards God to promote mutual charity among men. For the latter, as is plain, is by its very nature rooted in the former, and springs from it by a kind of spontaneous growth. Nor is it possible that there should be any lack of charity among men, or rather it must needs be enkindled and flourish, if men would but ponder well the charity which Christ has shown in this Sacrament. For in it He has not only given a splendid manifestation of His power and wisdom, but "has in a manner poured out the riches of His divine love towards men."† Having before our eyes this noble example set us by Christ, Who bestows on us all that He is, assuredly we ought to love and help one another to the utmost, being daily more closely united by the strong bond of brotherhood. Add to this that the outward and visible elements of this Sacrament supply a singularly appropriate stimulus to union. On

* II Cor. viii, 14.

† Conc. Trid. Sess. xiii, De Euch. c. ii.

this topic St. Cyprian writes: "In a word the Lord's sacrifice symbolises the oneness of heart, guaranteed by a persevering and inviolable charity, which should prevail among Christians. For when our Lord calls His Body bread, a substance which is kneaded together out of many grains, He indicates that we His people, whom He sustains, are bound together in close union; and when He speaks of His Blood as wine, in which the juice pressed from many clusters of grapes is mingled in one fluid, He likewise indicates that we His flock are by the commingling of a multitude of persons made one." * In like manner the Angelic Doctor, adopting the sentiments of St. Augustine,† writes: "Our Lord has bequeathed to us His Body and Blood under the form of substances in which a multitude of things have been reduced to unity, for one of them, namely bread, consisting as it does of many grains is yet one, and the other, that is to say wine, has its unity of being from the confluent juice of many grapes; and therefore St. Augustine elsewhere says: 'O, Sacrament of mercy, O sign of unity, O bond of charity!'"‡

* Ep. 96 ad Magnum n. 5 (al 6).

† Tract. xxvi in Joan nn. 13, 17.

‡ Summ. Theol. P. III q. lxxix a.I.

All of which is confirmed by the declaration of the Council of Trent that Christ left the Eucharist to His Church, "as a symbol of that unity and charity whereby He would have all Christians mutually joined and united. . . a symbol of that one body of which He is Himself the head, and to which He would have us, as members attached by the closest bonds of faith, hope, and charity,"* The same idea had been expressed by St. Paul when he wrote: "For we, being many, are one bread, one body, all we who partake of the one bread."† Very beautiful and joyful too is the spectacle of Christian brotherhood and social equality which is afforded when men of all conditions, gentle and simple, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, gather round the holy altar, all sharing alike in this heavenly banquet. And if in the records of the Church it is deservedly reckoned to the special credit of its first ages that 'the multitude of the believers had but one heart and one soul,'‡ there can be no shadow of doubt that this immense blessing was due to their frequent meetings at the Divine table; for we find it recorded to them: "They were persevering

* Conc. Trid., Sess. xiii, De Euchar., c. ii.

† I Cor. x, 17.

‡ Acts iv, 32.

in the doctrine of the Apostles and in the communion of the breaking of bread." *

Besides all this, the grace of mutual charity among the living, which derives from the Sacrament of the Eucharist so great an increase of strength, is further extended by virtue of the Sacrifice to all those who are numbered in the Communion of Saints. For the Communion of saints, as everyone knows, is nothing but the mutual communication of help, expiation, prayers, blessings, among all the faithful, who, whether they have already attained to the heavenly country, or are detained in the purgatorial fire, or are yet exiles here on earth, all enjoy the common franchise of that city whereof Christ is the head, and the constitution is charity. For faith teaches us, that although the venerable Sacrifice may be lawfully offered to God alone, yet it may be celebrated in honour of the saints reigning in heaven with God Who has crowned them, in order that we may gain for ourselves their patronage. And it may also be offered—in accordance with apostolic tradition—for the purpose of expiating the sins of those of the brethren who, having died in the Lord, have not yet fully paid the penalty of their transgressions.

* Acts ii, 42.

That genuine charity, therefore, which knows how to do and to suffer all things for the salvation and the benefit of all, leaps forth with all the heat and energy of a flame from that most holy Eucharist in which Christ Himself is present and lives, in which He indulges to the utmost His love towards us, and under the impulse of that divine love ceaselessly renews His Sacrifice. And thus it is not difficult to see whence the arduous labours of apostolic men, and whence those innumerable designs of every kind for the welfare of the human race which have been set on foot among Catholics, derive their origin, their strength, their permanence, their success.

These few words on a subject so vast will, we doubt not, prove most helpful to the christian flock if you in your zeal, Venerable Brethren, will cause them to be expounded and enforced as time and occasion may serve. But indeed a Sacrament so great and so rich in all manner of blessings can never be extolled as it deserves by human eloquence, nor adequately venerated by the worship of man. This Sacrament, whether as the theme of devout meditation, or as the object of public adoration, or best of all as a food to be received in the utmost purity of conscience, is to be regarded as the

centre towards which the spiritual life of a christian in all its ambit gravitates; for all other forms of devotion, whatsoever they may be, lead up to it, and in it find their point of rest. In this mystery more than in any other that gracious invitation and still more gracious promise of Christ is realised and finds its daily fulfilment: "Come to me all ye that labour and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you." *

In a word this Sacrament is, as it were, the very soul of the Church; and to it the grace of the priesthood is ordered and directed in all its fulness and in each of its successive grades. From the same source the Church draws and has all her strength, all her glory, her every supernatural endowment and adornment, every good thing that is hers; wherefore she makes it the chiefest of all her cares to prepare the hearts of the faithful for an intimate union with Christ through the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, and to draw them thereto. And to this end she strives to promote the veneration of this august mystery by surrounding it with holy ceremonies. To this ceaseless and ever watchful care of the Church our Mother, our attention is drawn by that exhortation which was uttered by the Holy

* St. Matt. xi, 28.

Council of Trent, and which is so much to the purpose that for the benefit of the Christian people We here reproduce it in its entirety. "The Holy Synod admonishes, exhorts, asks and implores by the tender mercy of Our God, that all and each of those who bear the name of Christian should at last unite and find peace in this sign of unity, in this bond of charity, in this symbol of concord; and that mindful of the great majesty and singular love of Jesus Christ our Lord, who gave His precious life as the price of our salvation and His flesh for our food, they should believe and revere these sacred mysteries of His Body and Blood with such constancy of unwavering faith, with such interior devotion and worshipful piety, that they may be in the condition to receive frequently that supersubstantial bread, and that it may be to them the life of their souls and keep their mind in soundness of faith; so that strengthened with its strength they may be enabled after the journey of this sorrowful pilgrimage to reach the heavenly country, there to see and feed upon that bread of angels which here they eat under the sacramental veils." *

History bears witness that the virtues of

* Conc. Trid. Sess. XIII, De Euchar. c. viii.

the Christian life have flourished best wherever and whenever the frequent reception of the Eucharist has most prevailed. And on the other hand it is no less certain that in days when men have ceased to care for this heavenly bread, and have lost their appetite for it, the practice of the Christian religion has gradually lost its force and vigour. And indeed it was as a needful measure of precaution against a complete falling away that Innocent III., in the Council of the Lateran, most strictly enjoined that no Christian should abstain from receiving the Communion of the Lord's Body at least in the solemn paschal season. But it is clear that this precept was imposed with regret, and only as a last resource; for it has always been the desire of the Church that at every Mass some of the faithful should be present and should communicate. "The holy Synod would wish that in every celebration of the Mass some of the faithful should take part, not only by devoutly assisting thereat, but also by the sacramental reception of the Eucharist, in order that they might more abundantly partake of the fruits of this holy Sacrifice." *

* Conc. Trid., Sess. XXII, c. vi.

THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

Most abundantly, assuredly are the salutary benefits which are stored up in this most venerable mystery, regarded as a Sacrifice; a Sacrifice which the Church is accordingly wont to offer daily "for the salvation of the whole world." And it is fitting, indeed in this age it is specially important, that by means of the united efforts of the devout, the outward honour and the inward reverence paid to this Sacrifice should be alike increased. Accordingly it is our wish that its manifold excellence may be both more widely known and more attentively considered.

There are certain general principles the truth of which can be plainly perceived by the light of reason; for instance, that the dominion of God our Creator and Preserver over all men, whether in their private or in their public life, is supreme and absolute; that our whole being and all that we possess, whether individually or as members of society, comes from the divine bounty; that we on our part are bound to show to God, as our Lord, the highest reverence, and, as He is our greatest benefactor, the deepest gratitude. But how many are there who at the present day acknowl-

edge and discharge these duties with full and exact observance? In no age has the spirit of contumacy and an attitude of defiance towards God been more prevalent than in our own; an age in which that unholy cry of the enemies of Christ: "We will not have this man to rule over us,"* makes itself more and more loudly heard, together with the utterance of that wicked purpose; "let us make away with Him," † nor is there any motive by which many are hurried on with more passionate fury, than the desire utterly to banish God not only from the civil government but from every form of human society. And although men do not everywhere proceed to this extremity of criminal madness, it is a lamentable thing that so many are sunk in oblivion of the divine Majesty and of His favours, and in particular of the salvation wrought for us by Christ. Now a remedy must be found for this wickedness on the one hand, and this sloth on the other, in a general increase among the faithful of fervent devotion towards the Eucharistic Sacrifice, than which nothing can give greater honour, nothing be more pleasing, to God. For it is a divine Victim which is here immolated; and accordingly through

* St. Luke xix, 14.

† Jer. xi, 11.

this Victim we offer to the most blessed Trinity all that honour which the infinite dignity of the Godhead demands; infinite in value and infinitely acceptable is the gift which we present to the Father in His only-begotten Son; so that for His benefits to us we not only signify our gratitude but actually make an adequate return.

Moreover there is another twofold fruit which we may and must derive from this great Sacrifice. The heart is saddened when it considers what a flood of wickedness, the result—as We have said—of forgetfulness and contempt of the divine Majesty, has inundated the world. It is not too much to say that a great part of the human race seems to be calling down upon itself the anger of heaven; though indeed the crop of evils which has grown up here on earth is already ripening to a just judgment. Here then is a motive whereby the faithful may be stirred to a devout and earnest endeavour to appease God the avenger of sin, and to win from Him the help which is so needful in these calamitous times. And they should see that such blessings are to be sought principally by means of this Sacrifice. For it is only in virtue of the death which Christ suffered that men can satisfy, and that most abundantly, the demands of

God's justice, and can obtain the plenteous gifts of His clemency. And Christ has willed that the whole virtue of His death, alike for expiation and impetration, should abide in the Eucharist, which is no mere empty commemoration thereof, but a true and wonderful, though bloodless and mystical, renewal of it.

To conclude, we gladly acknowledge that it has been a cause of no small joy to us that during these last years a renewal of love and devotion towards the Sacrament of the Eucharist has, as it seems, begun to show itself in the hearts of the faithful; a fact which encourages us to hope for better times and a more favourable state of affairs. Many and varied as we said at the commencement, are the expedients which an inventive piety has devised, and worthy of special mention are the Confraternities instituted either with the object of carrying out the Eucharistic ritual with greater splendour, or for the perpetual adoration of the venerable Sacrament by day and night, or for the purpose of making reparation for the blasphemies and insults of which it is the object. But neither We nor you, Venerable Brethren, can allow ourselves to rest satisfied with what has hitherto been done; for there remain many things which must be further

developed or begun anew, to the end that this most divine of gifts, this greatest of mysteries, may be better understood and more worthily honoured and revered, even by those who already take their part in the religious services of the Church. Wherefore, works of this kind which have been already set on foot must be ever more zealously promoted; old undertakings must be revived wherever, perchance, they may have fallen into decay; for instance, Confraternities of the Holy Eucharist, intercessory prayers before the Blessed Sacrament exposed for the veneration of the faithful, solemn processions, devout visits to God's tabernacle, and other holy and salutary practices of the same kind; nothing must be omitted which a prudent piety may suggest as suitable. But the chief aim of our efforts must be that the frequent reception of the Eucharist may be everywhere revived among Catholic peoples. For this is the lesson which is taught us by the example, already referred to, of the primitive Church, by the decrees of Councils, by the authority of the Fathers and of the holy men in all ages. For the soul, like the body, needs frequent nourishment; and the Holy Eucharist provides that food which is best adapted to the support of its life. Accord-

ingly all hostile prejudices, those vain fears to which so many yield, and their specious excuses for abstaining from the Eucharist, must be resolutely put aside, for there is question here of a gift than which none other can be more serviceable to the faithful people, either for redeeming our times from the tyranny of anxious cares concerning perishable things, or for the renewal of the Christian spirit and perseverance therein. To this end the exhortations and example of all those who occupy a prominent position will powerfully contribute, but most especially the resourceful and diligent zeal of the clergy. For priests, to whom Christ our Redeemer entrusted the office of consecrating and dispensing the mystery of His Body and Blood, can assuredly make no better return for the high honour which has been conferred upon them, than by promoting with all their might the glory of His Eucharist, and by inviting and drawing the hearts of men to the health-giving springs of this great Sacrament and Sacrifice, seconding thereby the longings of His most Sacred Heart.

May God grant that thus, in accordance with Our earnest desire, the excellent fruits of the Eucharist may daily manifest themselves in greater abundance, to the happy

increase of faith, hope, and charity, and of all Christian virtues; and may this turn to the recovery and advantage of the whole body politic; and may the wisdom of God's most provident charity, Who instituted this mystery for all time "for the life of the world," shine forth with an ever brighter light.

Encouraged by such hopes as these, Venerable Brethren, We, as a presage of the divine liberality and as a pledge of our own charity, most lovingly bestow on each of you, and on the clergy and flock committed to the care of each, our Apostolic-Benediction.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, on the 28th day of May, being the Vigil of the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, in the year 1902, of Our Pontificate the five and twentieth.

LEO XIII., POPE.

EJACULATIONS AND PRACTICES IN HONOUR OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT*

My Lord and my God!

(Seven years and seven quarantines, if said looking at the Blessed Sacrament exposed, with faith and reverence; Pius X., May 18, 1907.)

Jesus, my God, I adore Thee here present
in the Sacrament of Thy love!

(100 days, every time, if said while kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle: Pius X., June 28, 1908.)

O Jesus, present in the Blessed Sacrament,
have mercy on us!

(100 days, every time, in any language, provided the translation be faithful: Pius X., July 6, 1909.)

Heart of Jesus in the Eucharist, have
mercy on us!

(300 days, every time: Pius X., December 26, 1907.)

Practice.

*An Indulgence of 100 days every time a person makes some *external* sign of reverence on passing a building where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved: Pius X., June 28, 1908.

Our Lady of the Most Holy Sacrament,
pray for us!

(100 days, every time, if said before the Blessed Sacrament exposed: Pius X., December 30, 1905.)

O Sacrament most holy, O Sacrament
divine, All praise and all thanksgiving be
every moment Thine!

(100 days: Pius VII., May 24, 1776.)

Praise be to the Most Sacred Heart of
Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament!

(300 days, every time: Pius X., June 12, 1905.)

Anima Christi (Soul of Christ, etc.)
To this prayer are attached the following
Indulgences. 1. 300 days every time. 2.
Seven years once a day after receiving
Holy Communion. 3. A Plenary Indulgence
once a month on the conditions of Confes-
sion, Communion, and prayer for the Pope's
intentions, during a visit to the Blessed
Sacrament in a church: Pius IX., Jan. 9,
1854.

Pange Lingua, with versicle and collect.
1. 300 days, once a day. 2. 100 days, once
a day, for reciting the Tantum Ergo (the
last two verses of above hymn) with versicle
and collect. Pius VII., Aug. 24, 1818.

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